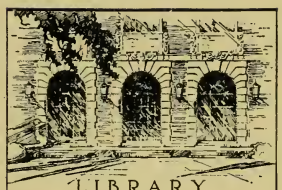

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THE

MILITIA MAJOR:

OR THE

SOCIAL SYSTEM IN TIPPERARY.

CHAPTER I.

THE OUTLAW.

No wail came from those who watched the dead to tell that hope was over. All was dark and still within the rude shelter that MacCarthy's exertions had placed over the wretched mother, and her suffering children; yet how much anguish lay within its narrow limits. Ye, who have watched life's last flutter fade from the

lips of a beloved child, can, and will understand the feelings of Biddy Sweeney, as she knelt beside the bundle of dried sedge, on which lay, passive, in death's grasp, the child of her love, the nursling of her affections, so watched, so guarded, so caressed, in the burning, wasting sickness, that consumed its little victim, without exhausting, for one moment, the fountain of a mother's love. Ye dainty ones, who have stood beside the downy couch, where lay your heart's treasure,

> "The first dark day of nothingness,
> The last of danger and distress,"

measure not the anguish you endured in that trying hour, mitigated by a thousand soothing circumstances, and sympathised with by surrounding friends, consoled by feeling human means had done its best—measure not, I say, *your* anguish with the bitterness of that desolate one; raised from the bed of sickness herself, but to watch the dying pangs of her child; the only draught to cool its burning lip, what a

mother's wasted limbs bore from a neighbouring ditch—when the can of luxurious milk, placed within her reach by the friendly hand of the schoolmaster, was exhausted by the burning thirst of the sufferers—he alone of the neighbourhood braved the horrors of "the sickness," as typhus fever is emphatically termed by the lower orders; food enough, and to spare, was laid by charitable hands, but only within a *civil* distance of the dire infection, so religiously avoided, yet so fatal in its effects, each succeeding summer.

The plague was stayed, Death had claimed and received its victim, in the miserable hut, MacCarthy now entered, and the fiery and vindictive feelings of the old man found vent in a passionate burst of grief, as the moon gleamed brightly in, revealing the scene of death and sorrow before him. There lay little Mary, the flower of the flock, her sunny hair falling, with a look of life over her lifeless brow, stiff, cold, and calm, with that mysterious

dignity imprinted on her features with which death invests the child as well as the sage, the peasant as the peer. One slight, emaciated hand, held firmly, even in death the small bit of palm blessed the Easter before; preserved amidst the wreck of all, and placed there, the last, sole consolation, the darkened, yet loving mother, had to offer her dying child; the other, held in the convulsive grasp of the wretched parent, as she gazed with a wordless sorrow, that found no vent in tears; and aroused, but to seeming consciousness, as the kind-hearted old man gently parted the hands death had severed, placing, at the same time, her youngest born in the arms of the afflicted woman. The appeal was felt, and responded to, for their nervous pressure of this object of her love, told there were ties still left to her stricken heart.

But no word or tear came, until one, more wretched than herself, knelt beside her, and then the deep, heart-stirring grief of the bereaved father roused her woman's na-

ture to offer consolation, while her own soul writhed beneath the blow. But when was it woman looked unmoved on man's sorrow? Be she such as the wise man valued above all price, or earth's weakest and vilest, that one common feeling to the daughters of Adam remains the same; to speak comfort to man in his abasement and sorrow; to give up (no small sacrifice) the self luxury of grief, dry up the blighting, burning tear of manhood,

"Oh, Martin Sweeney," she cried, as her wretched husband strained her to his breast, "the Lord gave, and He took your darlin' from you; an' sure, who had a bether right than Him that lent her to you, glory be to His holy name, an' took her back to Himself, bekase she was too good for this sinful, desolate world, at all, at all."

"Oh Biddy *mavourneen* don't say against my *keenin'* the *Bragh Lanive*,* or the heart will break in two within me. There she lies, widout a smile or a welcome for

* A fine child.

her poor father, that stole like a wild baist from his cover, in the dead hour of the night, to get but one look at his *Colla Machree*, an' she was gone before I could come in id; the sogers and the peelers may take me, now, Biddy, whin they like, for there's my heart's jewel lyin' there, widout wake or berrin; and you, Biddy *acushla*, widout half yeerself in id, worn to the skin and bone, wid the weight of grief they put on ye, and the sickness and hardship that went through ye."

The sickness and hardship had indeed told both on Biddy and her husband, to a fearful degree, in a few short weeks; and there was something inexpressibly touching in the outbursts of their grief, as each scanned the countenance of the other, by the faint and unequal moonlight; making light of their own sufferings, while each traced the ravages of sorrow and want, in the pallid cheeks and sunken features of the beloved partner.

Morning dawned, and found the wretched parents still watching by the dead; and as

its grey autumnal light revealed objects each moment more distinctly, MacCarthy returned from his midnight watch outside, to warn Sweeney that he had outstaid the hour, that with safety he could pass through that neighbourhood; but the misery of that night rendered the outlaw reckless of consequences, and it was only after the schoolmaster led his excited feelings into the channel of devotion, reverentially muttering prayers for the repose of the departed, that the father's feelings were calmed down sufficiently to think of parting with the released dead, or miserable living.

"Biddy, my heart's darlin', come to me, when you've seen the last ov her, an' we'll beg from strangers through the wide world wid the two that are left, an' lay her beside my mother—God rest her soul—in the church-yard ov Knockgragh, an' put a a dawny tombstone at her head, to shew me where my bright-hair'd Mainy lies, that 'ill

light her sinful, distracted father to glory when this sinful world is over."

Alas! a far different light enveloped, the next moment, the insensible object of his sorrowing thoughts, suppressed voices were heard in the mouth of the kiln, and with a sudden explosion, the dry sedge on which the dead lay, ignited into brilliant flame, spreading fearfully and rapidly around, while the confined smoke in the narrow limits of the hovel nearly suffocated the living, and drove them with a simultaneous rush into the open air:

The first impulse of self-preservation over, all three, sprang back into the flame; the mother, with her helpless infant tightly folded to her breast, shielded by her scorching arms, in that hour of mortal danger, buffetted the raging element with a desperation equal to either of her companions, one thought alone animated all; to rescue, not only the remains of little Mary, from this unchristian burial, but to save

the eldest born, their curly-headed Johnny, from the awful conflagration that surrounded him; while the deep slumber of childhood lay heavy on the weary lids of the sick boy, in the corner of the hut, undisturbed, unawakened, through the agonising events of that night. The bright devastating flame—the dark volume of black smoke, beat them not back from the rescue of those they loved. The scorching element baffled them not; but the hand of legal power was on them. The party of Police, guided by Mr. Wetherall, who had kindled the flame by igniting some combustibles, placed in the aperture that led from the mouth to the eye of the kiln—just to lay the infection by the purifying ordeal of fire—now dragged their victims forth, alike regardless of the loud harrowing-cry of either parent to save their children from being consumed before their eyes; or the death struggle of MacCarthy to snatch the lifeless and living from the horrors of such a grave;

but the party were too numerous and too much irritated against Sweeney, for his former escape, to permit either the School-master or Biddy to elude their grasp just at such a time; they might be mistaken in the identity of the outlaw; their orders were to secure him at any risk, as well as all those who might share his company, or afford him a temporary protection; orders literally obeyed despite the frenzied effort —the passionate entreaty— the deadly struggle of the wretched prisoners. For a brief moment, the raging element paused in its fury, as if to allow one more heart-rending appeal from the miserable parents, to be scoffed at by the fiend, whose mocking laugh sounded in their ears as the fated knell of their children. The next, wild and high rose the shriek of the anguish-stricken father and mother, as the frail roof of the doomed cabin gave way, burying alike, beneath its ruins, the dead and living in one common grave.

CHAPTER II.

MOTHER AND SON.

"He'll fight, but he won't marry her," was the concluding phrase of a long argument sustained between Mr. Nick O'Brady and his mama, relative to the 'intentions' of Lieutenant Jennings towards the senior lady of the O'Brady family.

"And you must fight him then, Nick," retorted the mamma, quickly, "for I won't brook to have Jane the talk of the county, and he march away in a whole skin; besides, his dangling after her the whole summer has done her the greatest injury,

and kept men off that would have been right good matches, and glad to get her ; but that she had that Johnny Raw philandering her wherever she went, and now, to have her lie on hands, and you, swearing that you cant't pay a penny of the arrear due to her, or me or the running gale is too bad, so I can't or won't put up with it."

"Ask him his intentions then," suggested Nick. who was fairly driven to the wall by the last argument.

"And much good I'd get by that," returned the lady ; "hasn't he avoided being alone with me for the last month in every way he could ; and though Jane went as far as she could to make him speak out, he never said a word yet that could be caught at ; besides, it's high time to bring him to, for since he got in with those highfliers at Ballyross, he shuns Jane very much; and never comes after her now ; but when he's left to himself, with nothing to do all day, he sits on the battlements of the bridge

down at the village, watching the trout as they rise, while he smokes that eternal cigar from morning until night."

"Oh yes!" returned Nick, "he takes an odd pelt of mortar at the trout too, and he and another chap have got up a little amusement for themselves, spitting over the battlements at one side, into the stream, then running across to the other, betting whether they or the froth shall arrive first."

"Still he's General Jennings's eldest son, and Jenny is no chicken," responded the Mamma, "and something *must* be done."

"Well, get the Major to call him out—he's first fiddle at picking a quarrel, and there's no fear but he'll bully, though 'tis a deuced clever fellow that would make him fight."

"What absurd nonsense you do talk, Nick; when you know, as well as I do, that nothing would make him fall out with the officers, that he has worked heaven and earth to get quartered, I may say, at his

own avenue gate, with a picquet turned out every night to protect him; for, as to the two police stationed in the house, he'd have been shot long ago if he were only trusting to them without a company of soldiers at their back; so it is worse than idle to think of *his* calling Jennings to account."

"Well, what good will it do either you or Jinny my doing so, and shooting the fellow through the head some fine morning; surely a dead man can't marry her, and hang me if you ever catch me standing twelve paces for child's play to please any woman that ever lived. So, sure as we go out, the daylight goes through Jennings the first shot."

"He'll never let it go to that," returned the lady. "Let this intention of yours be well known, and there's little fear but *his* will be explained to Jenny's satisfaction, and mine before a week, and once for all, Nick, if you do not bring this spooney boy to, the girls and I must leave

you, and let Mr. Fogarty and you settle about the arrear of interest and jointure due; you know very well you palavered us into coming here, when we had the execution actually put into the sheriff's hands; and what did we get by it; we saw the officers at Drumgar to be sure, because your uncle wanted our company to amuse them, for fear they'd mutiny, at the holes he crammed them into, at Ballyvoyle, but there was always your aunt, with her mopish look and prudish ways, with those die away girls, doing sentimental, in the way, and like all the officers in the world, they were sure to pay most attention to the ladies of the house they were entertained at."

"Well, why didn't you entertain them here, and then you'd have been even with them," returned Mick, "I'm sure you had my leave, and 'tis hard if the house wasn't big and empty enough to see a whole regiment, not to say half-a-dozen officers,

ready to hang themselves, in a stupid country quarter."

"You'd provoke a saint Nick, talking in this way, without a chair for them to sit down on, nor a servant in the house with a shoe and stocking to their feet except Nickey the nurse, that I dressed up in old livery I brought with me ; entertain officers indeed!

Aye, Ma'am, with as good an entertainment as you and your attorney, Mr. Fogarty, left your own son, to put up with," returned Nick, bitterly ; "it was he and you disposed of the furniture—not I—and whenever the old mistress and the young ladies leave the master a pound in his pocket, to pay the servants their wages, I suppose then they'll go no longer barefooted."

"We never asked nor sought for anything but our own," returned his mother; "And if you were like another young man, instead of idling after a brace of dogs, sporting and spending Maudling in every

shabeen in the country, with that good-for nothing Frank Mandeville for a companion you'd be married long ago, to your cousin Agnes; and the major glad to pay every shilling you owe, and set you up, and repair this castle rack-rent into the bargain."

A burst of uncontrollable laughter, notwithstanding the bitter feelings of the moment before, was Nick O'Brady's reply, to this consolatory suggestion of his mother's; the bare idea of the Major being glad to pay *his* debts, was a source of mirthfulness to a mind always on the stretch for amusement, that atoned for any aspersion cast on himself or his friend for their mode of dissipating time; and with much commicality of manner and affected seriousness of countenance, he requested an explanation from his sapient parent, of how he could possibly attain so desirable an end.

"Run away with Agnes" responded the lady," and let explanations alone, until the Major comes handsomely down with the

ready rhino, then come back and put a bold face on it, give a dashing *hawling* home, and the nine days' wonder will soon be over, while you pocket the money and hold the strings of the Major's purse for the rest of your life, if your'e not a greater fool, Nick O'Brady, than your mother takes you for."

"Bravo!" shouted Nick, "I'd fight Jennings or my namesake himself if you could manage that for me; for a dog has a better life than mine has been for many a day, between bills, bonds, and bailiffs. The dog can follow the game when 'tis started, more than his master can without being dogged or hunted down by some blackguard sheriff or attorney."

" Well, it's your own fault, Nick, if the game escapes, and you put on the right scent—The ball is at your foot, I may say, it remains with you now to kick it—Bring Jennings to his senses, and I'll lend a helping hand to carry off Agnes to the

mountains without asking her papa's consent for the journey."

How far Nick profited by this latter motherly suggestion, the approaching races of Moylerstown will more fully reveal, though the accidental plunging of the lieutenant's horse the first day placed the rider at the mercy of a much more vindictive personage than Nick O'Brady. "Nickey, the Nurse," in a spirit of faithfulness to the O'Brady family, and with the memory of some fagging duty, he himself had performed, in their eagerness to cultivate Mr. Jennings's society, boldly drove the outside car of his mistress over the prostrate body of the fallen soldier, despite the screams and adjurations of the four ladies seated thereon, and by dislocating the lieutenant's collar-bone, saved him, for the present at least, from a duel, or a wedding; Mr. Nick O'Brady's belligerent "intentions" being necessarily postponed until the injured man approached to something like convalescence.

CHAPTER III

LEGISLATING IN IRELAND.

A sunless October day, mild but bracing, sent forth its thousands to the race course of Moylerstown; the faint breeze, light though it was, whirled in eddying currents the cast-away leaves of a brighter season; those perishable memorials that summer had been, had past like the dazzling illusions of our spring time, swept away by Time's autumnal blast, to wither and moulder into nothingness and decay.

Vehicle after vehicle rolled onwards to the scene of amusement; the dashing,

well-appointed four-in-hand of Lord Glenmore, filled with London fashionables, as well as the low-backed car, with its *kish* full of merry faces, were bound there to see and be seen ; while many and varied were the intermediate class of equipages that sought for precedency and eligible position at either side of the course. Numerous races were won and lost—horses slipped, rolled and stumbled—sworn at by their respective riders ; while some fortunate winner, amidst the shouts and hurrahs of the assembled multitude, bent his neck proudly to receive the well-earned and expected pat of approbation from a triumphant master's hand. Evening shadows fell almost unperceived on this scene of bustle and excitement. The respectable portion of the company present retired quickly, in succession, to their respective homes, and as the twilight hour closed in, few remained, except those, who, to use their own language, were determined on "making a night of it." Amongst the Tents

two men at this time might be perceived, wrapped in the common frieze coat of the peasantry, entering a tent somewhat removed from the rest, before which loitered a man, apparently a watcher or a listener. Advancing on their approach, he addressed them in Irish, which was at once answered by the well-known pledge—*Slawn tha huith.* The sentinel, if such he were, then fell back, allowing the two new comers to enter the curtained recess before which he stood. The tent was one of small dimensions, yet sufficiently large to accommodate a card party, who occupied its centre, consisting of four young men, seemingly of that class of farm servants to small holders of land in that part of the country, commonly known under the appellative, "Service Boys." a class more than suspected of being deeply engaged in the barbarous outrages nightly perpetrated; enjoying a sort of independence irrespective of wages, taking each year con acre potatoe ground from their masters, and thus led to

look on themselves as no despicable representatives of the landed interest of the country; while the money their crop each season supplied them with, too often induced habits of idleness and reckless expenditure, inducing a passion for company keeping, and its consequent evils, drunkenness and gambling. The latter passion naturally turned their minds towards the acquisition of the property of others. Without the restraining principles of a higher class, to check this covetous craving, they, by degrees, considered public and private property but as a sort of common wealth, on which they were to draw whenever opportunity offered. Too often they commenced by robbing their own masters to enable them to indulge in this demoralising propensity for play, gradually sinking into crimes of a deeper dye, until their whole life became one of confirmed profligacy, —wasteful expenditure, without the necessary means of supply, even in men of a better order, leads to crime—into

what an abyss then must the half-fed untutored wretch be plunged, whose idleness and knavery throws him out of bread, and places him entirely at the disposal of those who name any terms but that of honest industry to supply it.

The party at play were exactly of this description; two of them were "sarvice boys" without places; and two of them bid fair to be soon in the same predicament; they each sat on a small pile of turf, their knees drawn together, so as to form a sort of resting place for a large sized bellows, without a pipe, on which were dealt out, at the interesting game of five and ten, a very obscure pack of cards—each one clinging with much tenacity to its fellow, and only separated by the moistened thumb of the dealer. The stake for which they played, hung immediately from a crook, fixed in the centre of the tent over their heads, familiarly known by the term *cobler*; but which the unenlightened will comprehend as a dried pig's head; and we

much doubt whether the largest stake ever thrown away at Crockford's excited more intense interest in the brain of my Lord George, or Lord John, than this savoury *morceau* did in the heart—we should rather say the digestive organs of the five-and-ten party, seated round the bellows.

This novel description of Faro Bank was supplied by a very witch-looking Being, that crouched over a few smouldering sods of turf, in an extreme corner of the tent; over which hung an old ricketty iron pot, filled with water, awaiting the end of the game; while in the red ashes around, small heaps of potatoes were sufficiently visible to afford a reasonable prospect of their supplying a smoking and not unpalatable adjunct to the contents of the pot, when the fate of the game and the pig's head was decided. In the meantime, the old lady keenly bent her scalded yet undimmed eyes on the players with an expression of cunning and gratified avarice lighting up those decayed orbs, which shone out, un-

naturally bright, amidst the mummy features that surrounded them ; and so absorbed was her attention, and that of those she watched, that the two men, we before mentioned as entering the tent, stood for some seconds unperceived, nor were they recognised by the dim light shed from a gaunt sort of candle, stuck in a raw potato, for the immediate use of the card party, until the lower and shorter of the two spoke.

"At it yet, boys, an' mysilf thought it was softening the cabbage before this. Blow the wan if its won to-night, an' plinty ov work in hands to keep ye goin for the next week. Do ye know the news, an' ye sittin there like a set ov Bosthoons ? here's Martin Sweeney broke jail, an' the commission is coming down to Clonmel to thry every mother's son among ye ; land ill be chape anny how, for a power ill cross the say wid the hard swearing."

"Whisha Martin, more luck to ye'r elbow," cried our old acquaintance, Jim Sullivan, throwing his cards flat on the bellows ; "bad

cess to me, but I'd lose the best hand I ever held, and the ace of hearts trumps, to hear that same news; *arrah* Martin, how is every ropes length of ye?" cried he, starting up, and seizing the hand of the outlaw. "Sure is it yoursilf that's in it, at all, at all; I thought Barney was making goms ov us all, till I caught a sight ov your face; and maybe, I was n't proud to see it; but the peelers, Martin, *alan na*, will catch you here, in no time, for they're to go the rounds before eleven o'clock, and it's no way far from that same now,"

"Sorra a fear," cried Barney, "there's wan watchin outside; an' hasn't my mother her license, an' lave from the Major to sleep in the tent dhuring the races."

"Ah, thin, Barney, your'e the boy for playin' at both ends of the fiddle; how do you keep the major off your taw, an' you with so manny scores on the tally?" returned Jim.

"Bekase I have common sinse that

larned me, there's more ways than wan ov killin' a dog," was Barney's reply.

"Never heed, an' let Barney alone for knowin' his own know," remarked one of the players, who, notwithstanding the interruption, still held the cards in his hands.

"Come, Jim, an' finish your game, an' let Martin tell us how he gave um the slip; beganays, I found it no aisy work to bamboozle the turnkeys whin I was on the thread-mill, for batin' Tom Delahunty."

"A friend assisted me," replied Martin; "an' I swore to be thrue to him; an' I, as wan as took a black oath to mysilf, that I'd nathere stop nor stay, ate nor dhrink, till I righted him, that was brought into throuble by me and mine; so here, boys, if ye'er thrue to wan another, don't let it be said Corny MacCarthy crossed the say without aiming a blow at his enemies."

"We're sworn men," responded the five-and-ten party in a breath.

"Aye," chimed in Barney; "but not

aginst the Licker, an' blast the other oath I'll take till I rosin my gob first Here, Granny," he cried, shouting at the top of his voice to the old woman "where's the black bottle—pleasure afore business, anny day."

The crazy and decrepid looking being he had addressed, seemed to comprehend his meaning more by the accompanying gesture of putting his hand to his mouth, than by any word uttered; and groping in the corner she occupied, produced the article required, but with, seemingly, no disposition to surrender it to the tender mercies of Barney.

"What a grip she howlds on id," cried he, "and tho' she's my own born mother, I might choke, afore she'd give me a dhrop to wet my lips, widout the *whereas*, first."

The old dame watched keenly the features of her son, as he spoke; grinned, as if in assent, holding out her withered palm for the expected gratuity, while Barney produced, after much fumbling, in a pocket

placed in the inside of a flannel jacket, he wore underneath his frieze coat, a small piece of silver, that caused the unearthly bright eyes of the hag to gleam forth with a demon-like sort of expression, as she snatched the coin, giving Barney, at the same time, the bottle in exchange; while she produced from a large wallet hung at her side, an empty blacking pot, that was soon filled and quaffed by each of the party, except Martin Sweeney; when it came to his turn, he passed it to his lips untasted, while he flung its contents on the ground.

"Let the earth drink it," he cried in a deep, husky voice, nearly choked with smothered passion, "as it will drink Dan Witherill's blood, before the blessed sun rises and sets three times on the black villain. Who can stand up for him?" he cried wildly, looking around him, as if seeking to reconcile his own heart with the deed of murder he contemplated, by arguing with some show of fairness, the justice of the act his better feelings recoiled from. "Who

can say he'll not meet his desarvings? What was I, before he sthruck undher me an' mine? In fair or market was there a dacenter couple than Biddy Sweeney and her husband? Had we ever a word with a nabor? Wasn't there a cow on the bawn, an' a pig on the floore; the rint paid to the gale day; and warn't we as happy as the day was long; myself, my wife, and my childre in honest industry? And what are we now?" he shouted madly. "My children burnt afore me eyes without a berrin; their disthracted mother beggin from doore to doore; an' their sinful father axin for justice on the thraytor that bethrayed us."

"Never heed, Martin," cried Jim Sullivan to the wretched man, whose convulsive sobs told, even in stronger language than his impassioned words, how bitter was the contrast between the present and the past. "Cheer up; many a good man's in your case; an' what are we here for but to right you an' the likes ov you. The Major above, there, and all his sort can loose or bind who

they will by the law ov the land.; but it's even-handed justice with us; the Lord is tried by the self same rule as the beggar, an' it's Barney there, that knows how to lay down the law to the best ov um."

The gentleman thus appealed to, withdrew his attention for a moment from the black bottle, and, with a tremedous oath, swore "he was Power's man, or Dan Witherill's man, or any other man's man, for thirty shillings down, but blow him to—(we shall call it his final resting-place,) if ever he snapt thricker less; an' if he didn't do the job clare an' clane, he wouldn't ax a penny. No purchase no pay, but small chance ov a miss; he did some good work in his day, and could put a bullet, flying at twenty yards distance, into the stoutest man that iver stood in shoe leather, an' had done it before this, an' he riding at the top of his speed too."

This bravado brought a cheer from the party round the bellows, who, with the addition of frequent draughts from the

bottle Barney still clutched in his hand, as well as the constant tipling they had kept up during the greater portion of the day, were sufficiently intoxicated to admire the deeds of violence, he now commenced narrating; the midnight attack—the treacherous waylaying—the cold-blooded murder, each were in turn dwelt on with pleasure by the narrator, and excited much applause from the audience; nor were any of the party in a state cool enough to condemn the cruelty and barbarity of such deeds, did even their prejudices permit; Martin Sweeney's own wrongs, and present misery, with the precarious liberty he enjoyed, supplied maddening excitement sufficient to steel his heart against any feeling of sympathy, or compassion, with the oppressor, real or imaginary, under consideration; and Jim Sullivan and his companions looked upon Barney and all others of his class, but as the executive of a code of laws they and such as they had set up, not only for the protection but equal dis-

tribution of public property. The conduct of this, or that individual—private right to this or that portion of land, with the eligibility of the present possessor, were subjects freely discussed at their different meetings, and decided on by those self-elected judges, with a promptitude that might well shame the law's slow delay, in the simplest process form, as well as in the proverbially lengthy Chancery suit; there was short time, it is true, allowed between *plea* and *rejoinder*, when any individual case came under the consideration of these midnight legislators. The usual mode of conducting the matter, was to elect an advocate, who was ordered to speak up for the absent party; this he generally did with much ingenuity, and ability, forgetting, in the feelings of the pleader, private hostility to the man whose cause he was called on to defend, bringing forward every extenuating circumstance likely to tell in favour of the obnoxious person, and sometimes managing his case

so well as to procure an acquittal, or a temporary respite; but when these laudable efforts proved unsuccessful, for his unconscious client, a written notice was drawn up, duly apprising him of the sentence of the court, and pourtraying in very forcible language, generally accompanied with a striking illustration, the manner and mode that sentence was to be carried into effect; no time was ever allowed for repentance, after this final decision went forth; the execution followed the fiat rapidly, and it was nsually at this stage of the proceedings that such men as Barney were called into council, to carry into effect the decrees; without sometimes having ever seen the individual whose life was to be taken by this hired assassin, the very first opportunity; were such allowed to pass, the murderer was considered to have broken his engagement, and one half of the promised reward became forfeit; but this was a matter of rare occurrence; these *handy boys*, as they were called, knew their

trade too well, and kept up a drill practice of firing at a spade stuck in the ground, with an old coat thrown on it, surmounted by a cast off hat, too constantly to run much risk of missing their aim, and their watchfulness in dogging their victim, outvied the savage Indian in his native forest, hunting on the trail of a destined quarry, to supply the cravings of Nature; or, as he lay in ambuscade, for days devoid of food, or sustenance, watching the motions of some hated enemy ready to pounce on his prey, the first unguarded moment, and secure the much coveted scalp.

On these occasions no danger deterred, no privation was too severe to be endured; no obstacle too great to be overcome, until the hellish object the paid monster had in view, was accomplished—days—weeks—months—might intervene between the commission to kill, and its final execution; but not for one hour, during that period, was the surveillance of the executioner withdrawn from his victim; his out-

goings and in-comings were all guardedly watched; his servants tampered with; his most secret movements guessed at, if not ascertained; his house and his path, by day and by night, alike beset; and this, with so much secresy and ingenuity, that frequently the doomed man never entertained one suspicion of his danger, until he found himself in the hand of his implacable and relentless murderer. It was of no avail then that he had never injured the man about to take his life, perhaps never seen him before; there was no personal feeling mixed up with the dire act about to be committed, and yet, escape from the bullet of this cold-blooded emissary, was, in ninety-nine cases out of one hundred, hopeless. Remorse never touched him, for his darkened mind considered he was carrying out a righteous decree; pity for his victim never moved him, for he was inflicting what his distorted sense of right deemed justly deserved; and gold could not tempt him to spare the life whose des-

truction was never valued higher than a few paltry shillings, or a pint of whisky. The natural cunning of such men, sharpened by that emulative spirit that leads to excellence in every trade, guarded against escape or surprise; defeat with them, was equally disgraceful, as with the soldier who stands in the breach with the colours of his country above his head, the arms of his sovereign in his hand, to do—or die—to perish in the path of his duty, or succeed. Escape from such an avenger was then hopeless, and this must account for the very few murders attempted in this distracted land, that are not entirely successful. Most of the peasantry it is true, were conversant with the use of arms, had them in their possession; and when their fierce passions were aroused, their prejudices insulted, or their rights encroached on, used them, not unfrequently, with fatal effect; but it was in most cases reserved for the class we are describing to commit the actual act of murder, though numbers

were generally concerned in plotting it; and the lower orders, for many miles round, were perfectly aware of its contemplation. Still the murderer was sure to escape ; he ran but little risk of discovery ; he had done his business well, and kept faith with his employers; and with their ideas of justice, deserved to be protected. Besides this, the very name of an informer was too odious, and his punishment too exemplary to tempt even the worst amongst them to brave such a fate. Rewards might be offered; bribes might be given, and taken; but in scarcely any case, unless the murderer himself, showed symptons of (to use their own expressive language, *stagging,*) was he ever informed against ; and this is a striking feature in the social system, that has cast such a blot on our country, not unworthy the consideration of the statesman and patriot ; and so far has this feeling of good faith, (for good faith it is, in a bad cause,) been carried, that it has occurred in many instances, that the man who

hired the murderer, unable at the time to pay his demand for the deed of blood, has passed his I. O. U. for the sum, (generally thirty shillings,) and when some time had elapsed after the murder was committed, that I. O. U. was duly presented, and claimed, the debtor in the case, unable or unwilling to discharge its contents, refused payment, whereon the party was processed to quarter sessions, decreed, and the sum recovered by a distress, though at the very same time there was pasted on the police barracks of the neighbourhood, and on every gate post in its vicinity, a reward of many thousand pounds to the person or persons who would give such information as would lead to the conviction of the actual murderer; and a free pardon, along with a large portion of this reward, to the murderer himself, did he prosecute, to conviction, any conspirator or conspirators in the aforesaid crime.

Now, is it not worth our legislators' while to pause on the moral elements that con-

stitute so anomalous a people. Is it not worth a passing consideration to enquire why it is that the wretch, who for a mere nothing, as a bribe, commits a cold blooded and deliberate murder on one who has never injured or offended him, can withstand all temptation to betray those who induced him to commit the act, can resist a thousand times the sum paid for its committal—can endure privation and want, such as fall to his vagabond lot—bear the thousand ills of a wretched existence—rather than stand before his fellow men as a traitor—rather than give up his accomplices in crime to be dealt with by that law whose decrees they have outraged, whose penalties they have so justly incurred.

Is it, then, too much to ask, from those who rule over us, to try the practical experiment of turning from evil to good this great principle of fidelity in a nation; to win the confidence of a people whose worst and basest can be true to one another; yet whose very virtues, in their present unhappy so-

cial condition, sink them deeper into crime. We have had enough and to spare of coercive measures; but the time is coming, and we hope, fast approaching, when free institutions through the length and breadth of the land, her industrial resources fairly developed; impartial justice, independent of creed, party, wealth, or station; educational privileges extended to the meanest and lowest of her sons; will raise our country from her present abject condition amongst the nations, place her on a par with the proudest and best. Teach her children a lesson they have never yet learned, to respect the law, as their best safeguard and friend, give the poorest among them a stake in the constitution and a right to claim its protection.

Let the fostering care and generous sympathy of an enlightened Government reclaim from barbarity and crime, men, intended by nature and nature's God, for higher and holier purposes; and then let the monuments of those who came before them, be what they may, on theirs shall be inscribed

in characters never to be erased, a nation's gratitude, disenthralled from the night-mare of oppression that bowed her energies to the dust, that converted a naturally generous, noble, and devoted people into a band of refractory Helots, sunk in idleness and want. Let it be the proud task of the great and the good to call into a second existence the intellectual superiority—the moral dignity —the social virtue, that once distinguished our country; and then, civilized Europe shall no more point the finger of scorn—the midnight assassin no more walk protected through the land, and the pale cheek of famine no more characterise her sons and daughters.

We now return to the party in the tent, who, after much discusssion on the propriety of taking Major Power's life, decided, without any hesitation, on the immediate death of his faithful man, sergeant Wetherell. Indeed, this had been long before determined on; though a stay of execution was obtained, from time to time, on the plea

of his life being the last in the lease of a neighbouring townland, in which some of the "Boys" or, at least, some of their admirers had an interest; all however, agreed in considering the long day allowed to the sergeant as a public evil sacrificed to private friendship; and, it was with the feeling of Patriots performing a solemn duty to their country, at the shrine of their own individual rights, that the final sentence was now pronounced, without an arrest of judgment, by the party in the tent—not a murmur was heard amongst them in his favour—not a whisper to let him live—his life had been one of warfare, with his own class—and now he was about to reap its bitter fruits. His footsteps through that life had been marked by want and sorrow, wherever he approached, and now his death-struggles were only to be looked on by his victims; his cunning, his duplicity, his avarice, his ferocity, towards his fellow men, was at an end—and, lawless as his judges might be themselves, they rejoiced in the justice

of the sentence. With the Major it was different—bitterly hated as he was by the whole party, it required all the weight and influence Martin Sweeney had amongst them, to save him from the same fate decreed to the sergeant. Not that he loved him a whit more than the rest, nor had cause to do so, for all the misery, privation, and persecution he had suffered, came from the hand of his landlord; but he was a Power, one of a race, his wife's family, had nursed and followed for years, and not a hair of his head should be touched.

"No, they might give the sergeant his desarvins; but he'd never face Biddy with the blood of a *cleanagh* on his hand."

Were it not that Martin's wrongs, and that respect, which the sternness of real suffering ever commands, prevailed, to turn them aside, his voice would not have been a casting one, in the unanimous shout that arose for Power's blood, when the Major's conduct came under discussion; nor, per-

haps, would he have succeeded in averting their purpose, had not Nickey, the nurse's head, at that moment. been thrust into the opening of the tent, and the party disturbed by his whisper, of—

"Whisht, an' bad luck to ye—'tis aisily known, ye had the licker inside, or ye wouldn't be *pullilewin* that way, for the Major's blood, and his own born Nevy comin' a top ov ye. Ye haven't the nathur ov brutes in ye," he continued, entering the tent at the same time, "to keep a boy outside watchin' for ye, for a whole morthial hour, an' never as much as offer him a glass ov what was goin' inside; an' 'tis only now, Misther Nick is comin' up from the Or'nary, an' a power ov dhrinkin' an' fun is below there; an' blind as he is with the licker, my brave boys, some ov ye had betther keep out ov the way, for there's no knowin' how he might let slip out, seein' ye; an' there's wan with him, beside, that keeps but a loose jaw."

This hint was not thrown away. A

stout, strapping, young fellow, in a blue body coat, and brass buttons, with tight corduroys, open at the knees, ready for a run, started from the heap of turf he sat on, with the bellows on his knees, and flinging it hastily to his companions, made for the corner, occupied by the old hag, while Barney, at the same time, disrobed her of the old grey cloak, whose neck rested over the *kercher*, that confined her grizzled locks, and adroitly hanging it on a line of rope, that went across the tent, near where she sat, formed a temporary screen, sufficiently large to conceal the blue-coated man, the old crone, and Martin, who was pushed into this quickly formed apartment just in time to escape being within eye range of Mr. Nick O'Brady and Mr. Frank Mandeville, who, at this moment, staggered, rather than walked, into the tent.

Nickey, the Nurse, in the mean time, had caught up the cards, scattered about, and

seemed deeply engaged in shuffling them backwards and forwards, as his master made his appearance, while that gentleman, with an oath, demanded—

"Was there even a three-legged stool among them for a man to sit down on?"

The required luxury, after some slight delay, was slipped under the cloak, and presented by Barney to Mr. Nick, who, after balancing himself, for some time, contrived to sit down, with his back propped partly against a worm-eaten chest, on which stood the candle, and partly against one of the uprights that supported the tent; his companion sought a resting place, on the heap of turf, formerly occupied by the card party, and both gentlemen continued, rather than commenced, heavy denunciations against Nickey, the Nurse, for daring not to be there to meet them, after bringing them so far, at that hour of the night.

Nickey tipped a knowing wink to his

comrades, who had fallen back, at the approach of their visitors, and now came forth into the faint radiation emitted from the farthing rushlight, and faced his accusers.

"Whisha, bad luck to me, Misther Nick but you'd provoke a saint—not to say mysilf—to hear ye getting on in sich a manner, an' I shivering an' shaking for as good as two hours there, outside the tint, waitin' for you an' Misther Frank. I'll be bound it's small throuble I gave ye; an' ye bettin' an' sportin' an' dhrinkin' below there, as if I wasn't your born sarvant, at all, an' ye had nothin' to think ov, but divarshun for the whole night; an' I, after huntin' over the whole coorse, an' every tint in it, to make off Barney an' Jim, an' a couple of stout boys, to the back ov um, to do your job."

"It's no go, to-night," returned Nick, whose potations affected his legs more than his head; "ye might as well think of getting into the Castle of Dublin, as into

Drumgar without a friend inside to sell the pass."

"Sure ye can burn the house," hiccupped Frank Mandeville, who, in his sober moments, was a man of peace, strangely at variance with the violent desperado, he affected to be in his drunken revelries.

"You're not better than a Jackass, Frank, to propose such a thing," returned his companion. "What kind of a fool do you take me for? that would bite his nose to vex his face; whose will Drumgar be when the last puff is out of the Major, do you think?" he demanded, triumphantly, "when his daughter is Mrs. Nick O'Brady, at your service."

"Though I am a jackass," replied Frank, with much offended dignity, "still I know too much of the law to say it will be yours. Suppose Captain O'Brien was to land some fine morning, where was your right and title then to Drumgar; Mrs. Nick O'Brady and her husband might look for it."

"Possession is eleven points of the law," returned Nick, "and small fear besides of the Captain returning; he was a General ten years ago, I heard, and sacked some town, where the streets were paved with gold; if ever he comes back, Drumgar wouldn't be a kennel for his dogs."

"Still," persevered Frank, "you'll have to fight for it yet."

"Whisha, let that never baulk your hand, Masther Nick," chimed in Barney, "if the Captin, or Giniral, or whatever he is, be all that's between you an' luck, he doesn't wear a four-laived shamrock, I suppose, that would turn the edge ov a bullet."

"Do ye hear, Barney," cried Nickey, the Nurse, "puttin' in a word for himsilf; sorra a job goin' but he'd like to have a finger in the pie."

"Is that a true bill, Barney?" demanded Nick O'Brady, reckless of whom he offended; "they say, when you have a black fast from whisky, you'd shoot a man

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for a half pint of spirits, and hang your best friend for a dandy of punch."

At this unguarded accusation, the countenance of Barney, naturally ill-looking, darkened into a scowl of ferocity, that was not lost on his companion, and helped to sober Nick O'Brady into a sense of his own thoughtlessness. Nickey the Nurse, Jim Sullivan, and the other two men, all spoke together, in exculpating Barney from the charge of treason; and it was only after much explanation, and assurance that only a joke was meant, that he resumed his usually reckless and indifferent manner; receiving the *amende* from Nick O'Brady in much the same way, a duellist of celebrity might be supposed to listen to an apology, etiquette might prescribe receiving, but not prevent avenging the very first opportunity. Neither Nick O'Brady nor Frank Mandeville were in a state to perceive this, and, Nickey the Nurse, and the rest of the party, were too anxious to keep on terms with Barney, and secure his

services, to appear dissatisfied with his manner.

"They all liked *Misther Nick*—he was a free an' aisy young gentleman, to be sure; but he nivir did an ill turn by a nabur, an' had the heart ov a prince to spend an' sport as far as it went; an' though he'd have his joke with the best, he'd stand to um afther through thick or thin."

This feeling in his favour prevented Barney from shewing, however he might feel, any resentment to "Misther Nick," and it was with much seeming good will he now joined in the various plans proposed for the carrying off Agnes; after much discussion, it was finally arranged that Nick O'Brady should, under some pretence, get one or other of his sisters to visit Drumgar the following evening, and that Nickey the Nurse was to drive her there, and seek an opportunity of opening the back door, unknown, to Sergeant Wetherell, and so give admittance to the party, first damping the powder in the

Sergeant's pistols; that Agnes was to be seized on, and carried to the shebeen of Bothered Nell (Barney's mother) there, to be met by her future spouse, and taken by him to a remote part of the country, where a discarded clergyman was to make them one, for life. The arrangement was complete, and the party all broke up in high spirits, except Frank Mandeville, who evinced much pugnacity of temper, as he, Nick O'Brady, and his faithful man Nickey, described, rather a meandering path on the dewy turf, in search of the public-house on the cross roads, where an ordinary was held that day, for sporting gentlemen, and where Mr. Frank Mandeville's tax-cart reposed, with many others, under a shed, that once had had a roof—in search of this equipage, were the party bound, and though the distance was short, not likely to reach it, at an early hour; both gentlemen contested stoutly for opposite sides of the compass, as being the nearest route, and but that Nickey had, during

his watch outside the tent, slept off, in a great measure the libations, he had indulged in, during the morning, when he snatched a few moments now and again, from his mistress' service, to pay his orisons at the shrine of the jolly God, it is very doubtful whether morning's dawn would not have found them, if not disputing the way to their inn, certainly at a considerable distance from that domicile. Nickey however knew the management of these gentlemen so well, that notwithstanding Frank Mandeville's wish to fight, and Nick O'Brady's propensity to jeer, he contrived to have both locked, arm in arm, by the time they came to the end of their journey; in order to accomplish this, he hit upon a theme that, from experience, he found whether drunk or sober, was most acceptable to Frank, and no way disagreeable to his master, provided his friend bore, with tolerable temper, the jests he indulged in, on those occasions, at his expense.

"Arrah, Misther Frank, don't be growlin' there, like a bear with a sore ear, at your commorade's good luck," cried Nickey, provoked at the pertinacity with which that gentleman sought to go the wrong road, as well as raised obstacles, when he and his master chuckled over the good fortune the latter was securing in running away with the heiress. "It's helpin' him you ought to be, not throwin' could wather in his way. If I waur in youre coat, sir, I'd share the luck with him, an' make a push for a sartin young lady to-morrow night mysilf; they'd be some sinse in that, to give the fat captin' the go-bye, insted ov snapping there, like the dog in the manger, that wont take the bone himsilf, nor let another have it."

"Well done, Nickey," cried his master, "you're the boy to deal with the officers, you gave one poor devil his *quietus* to-day, and you'd run away with another fellow's intended to-morrow night."

"Give me the hand, Nickey for that,"

hiccupped Frank, with much emotion. You're a wiser man than any of us, and wasn't I worse than a fool not to think of that before. I know she'll not keep ill will with me, after the first start," he muttered to himself. "She always liked me, and I'd see that fat brute Grant, hanged, drawn, and quartered, before I'd let her be his wife."

"He'll pink you yet," cried Nick, "for running away with his deary; but I wouldn't lose the laugh at his expense for a good deal, nor my mother's face of dismay, when she finds her daughter, Lucy, run away with, after being sent to trap another."

Frank joined in his friend's laugh, and an amicable understanding being thus established, both young gentlemen proceeded arm in arm, submitting to the direction of Nickey in guiding them on their way, as well as in arranging their future plans, while they discussed freely the pros and cons of their opening prospects.

Frank, it was agreed on, should be stationed, with a dog cart, at a convenient distance from the avenue gate of Drumgar, so as to receive Lucy before Agnes was aware where she was carried, that Frank was to drive her direct to a relative's house, some ten miles off, there to be persuaded to become Mrs. Frank Mandeville ; from whence they were to return to Kilgroggy, that to be their head quarters until the uncle Frank had expectations from died. Nick O'Brady assuring him that there was plenty of room in the old roost, and that as to *grub*, no fear of a famine when he had his forefinger and thumb on the Major's purse—the old gold would be sent flying for him, whether he liked it or not, and entertainment for man and beast the sign to be hung out from henceforth at Kilgroggy.

CHAPTER IV.

A RE-UNION.

In the meantime the party left behind in the tent broke up. The reprieved *cobler*, and the *old hag* alone remained in possession. Jim Sullivan and Martin Sweeney separated from the rest of their companions, and turned their steps in the direction of Paddy Dooly's, where Biddy had been sheltered since the fearful night, she and her husband had been last parted, her feeble state, and a relapse into fever, procured for her a release from the police barrack of Ballyvoyle, where, in the first in-

stance, she was removed in order to transmit her to the county jail, and from which she was now sent out of a special regard to their own safety, and that of the public. The law authorities made no objection to the proposal of Paddy, to take charge of her and her child, during her illness—a task he well and faithfully performed, removing the infant child to his own house, and putting the afflicted mother on a clean straw bed in an out house not far distant. Here she was attended by the servant girl, Mary Devane, who, though she was always admired by Jim Sullivan, as a clane dancer, and purty girl, won his heart completely, by the kindness of hers on this occasion. Late and early she watched over her patient, and after weeks of suffering, had the gratification of seeing her humane efforts crowned with success. Biddy recovered, however, but slowly, the death of her children, the imprisonment of her husband, beat down her spirit into the dust, and were it not for the faint hope

that she would yet see him, and be enabled to assist him, she would have died; but while he lived, there was something to live for, and she nursed her strength, and tried to walk about day after day, that she might in time be able to take the long-wished for journey to Clonmel. All this Martin learned from his companion Jim, before they left the tent, and now his object was to join her. The night had set in dark, which was favourable to their purpose, and making a circuit, so as to avoid parties of police that were going their rounds through the tents, they stepped cautiously forward, looking in every direction around them, before they proceeded, keeping out of the range of any light, and in this way gaining a bye road that led from the race-course in the direction of Knockanure. When the murmur of voices was no longer distinct, Jim gave vent to a hearty laugh, that but for the sternness of Martin's manner, that in some degree restrained him, was very near more than once breaking out, and

betraying them to a night patrol, they would afterwards have found it a difficult matter to escape from.

"I may laugh now an' welkim, that I'm out ov their hearin'," he remarked to his companion, as they trudged along, "an' if the gallows was afore me, I couldn't help it, when I thought of that oily rogue, Dan, gettin' his desarvins, the same night Misther Nick secured a wife an' a forthin; an', *mille a murther*, the Major—more bad luck to him—to lose his right hand man an' his daughther at the same offer."

"*Naw been vourah!*" responded Martin, in a surly tone, "what right has you, or the likes ov you, to make free with a raal lady's name. She's a Power every inch ov her, an' whativer her faather might do to anny ov ye, she nivir as much as riz a hard word on an infareyur since the day she was born."

"I wouldn't hurt a hair ov her head," returned Jim, "but I'd hilp her to a fine

sportin' young husband that id spend her daddy's goold for her, an' who could say, that would be doin' her a bad turn ?"

Martin groaned ; and Jim, concluding that he was too much occupied with his own sorrowful thoughts to sympathise in his merry ones, let the subject drop, whistling the rest of the way a dismal sort of ditty, giving vent, in its wild cadences, to his own excited thoughts. In this way they reached the Bawn or sort of wild common, on which Paddy Dooly's house was built; around it lay as much ground as would support a moderate sized family, if properly cultivated ; now in an unreclaimed state, its only crop a scanty, coarse herbage over-run with a sort of rag weed, known by the name of *Boohillawn,* much prized as steeds by the fairy gentry ; but its merits completely unknown to the Agricultural Society. Jim's visual orbs were just in a proper state to see double, and mount the *good people* on the *boohillawns* that lay scattered thickly around ; but his com-

panion was in no mood for fooling, and sober thoughts came over Jim, when, as they approached the house, Martin raised his hat reverentially from his head, and muttered, in a low solemn voice, a prayer in Latin for the repose of departed souls; his children were at that moment uppermost in his mind, and, this act of duty done, he burst forth into an impassioned thanksgiving to the God who had preserved his wife through sickness and sorrow, through fire and poverty, to give her a shelter and a home, and bring him once more to her side. Jim added a deep amen, and, both crossing themselves devoutly, entered the unfenced, straggling yard, that extended in front of the house; two dogs, with a snarling sort of bark, made their appearance from a neighbouring pig-stye, but, instead of following up the attack, came forward whimpering and whining a recognitory welcome to Jim, while they described sundry circles around him expressive of their joy at the meeting.

"The crathurs know me," he whispered to his companion, much pleased with his reception, "an' a good right they have; for I fed um for manny a day, afore I left this, thryin' to betther myself—I shared the best bit goin' with um, and that wasn't a bad wan; for Paddy Dooly was a brave warrant always for feedin' the sarvant boys, an' plaise the fates it's back agin soon I'll be with him—Down Viper!" he cried, "paws off Cæsar," as the dogs, encouraged by his caresses, increased the familiarity of theirs, by jumping on his person, "would ye ate a man for joy, an' lave nair a bit at all for his sweetheart,"

And, breaking from their rough welcome, he joined Martin, who had just given a low knock with his closed hand on the door that led from a small bin, or passage, to the kitchen.

"Do you spake first, Jim," said Martin, in a suppressed, agitated voice. "*She* might hear me, an' she's not strong yet."

"Sorra harum 'twould do her, if she did

at silf," returned Jim. "Mary, within, says, her heart is lighter for a week, afther I give her a surprise."

"That same may be," said Biddy's husband, in a tone of much sadness; "but the sorrow nivir touched Mary yet."

A voice from within now enquired—"Who was there, at this time ov night?" and Jim, in a reproachful tone, replied—"That the dogs thimselves, now-a-days, had more nathur for a man than the girl he'd be afther coortin' for three long years; they'd lick his hand, an' give him a welcome; but she'd turn the could shouldher an' keep at her own side ov the doore!"

"*Ochoon, machree!* she didn't know who was in id, at all, at all. Sure it ain't a witch you take me for?" said the female warden inside, in an explanatory tone. "I'd be as wise as Bothered Nell hersilf, afther tossing a cup, if I'd guess, 'twas you wor in id from that dead knock at the doore, that sounded like nothin' good, the cross atween us an' all harum, instead ov the

stave or a song a boy, called Jim Sullivan, used to strike up, whin he used to be comin' this way."

"Mary, *acushla ma chree*, open the doore," said Jim, in a softened tone, "an' I'll sing for you 'till mornin'. You know who's here now, anyhow, an' don't keep ill will an' a boult atween us."

"I bear you naither spleen, spite, malice, or envy, Jim," said Mary, still keeping the door closed, "an' I wish you all manner ov good luck, here, an' hereafther; but the man ov the house, nor hersilf, isn't within, nor anny ov the garsoons, none ov um come back from the races yit, an' you wouldn't ask a lone girl, Jim, to unbar the doore at this hour ov the night?"

"Whilsht, my *colleen dhas*," returned Jim, "open the doore, an' let mysilf an' another outside here in, out ov this cowld air, an' I'll be bound you'll give him a welcome; an' if you don't, Biddy Sweeney will, if she's in id, at all, at all."

"It's not Martin himsilf that's there?"

cried Mary, in a tone of joyfulness that told the query was answered in the affirmative by her own mind, even while she asked the question. "What come over me entirely, not to know the knock come from wan in throuble," she continued, hastily unbolting the door at the same time, then raising her voice to a louder key, so as to be heard in the inner apartment, she called out—"Oh, Biddy Sweeney, *mavourneen*, do you know the luck that's afore you?—Do you know who's in id this blessid night?—throw by your bades, Biddy *allanna*, an' give your own *Buohill* a welcome."

A cry of agonised joy came from the kitchen; the string of beads, with which Biddy had been telling the rosary, lay on the earthen floor, beside the spot where she knelt, and where she still continued in prayer, when she had supposed Mary opening the door for Paddy Dooly and his party, on their return from the races; the still bright embers of what had been a large turf fire, sent forth a glow of red

light into the apartment, and enabled Martin, as he strained his wife to his breast, to discover, by one glance at her pallid cheek, and closed eye, that she was alike insensible to his presence, or caress. A life of happiness could scarcely atone for the blight and anguish endured by the heart of the stricken husband, in that brief moment. His low wail of agony, first awoke to consciousness her he mourned, though Mary, with admirable presence of mind, had in the first instance thrown a piggin of water on the face of the fainting woman, and Jim, with considerate kindness, had rubbed the palms of her attenuated hands, nearly to blistering, with his horny fingers. Neither effort was successful, until the voice of her husband, and that voice a cry of misery, recalled her fleeting breath, brought back the faint colour to her cheek, and the assurance to her heart, that she was once more in the arms of that much loved husband, in comparative safety; then how anxiously did

she endeavour to remove from his mind, any fears as to her future health, or any doubts of their future welfare.

"It was only the weakness that came over her, the last ov the sickness; but now that he was come back to her, she'd be brave and hearty, to mend and make for him as well as ever; they'd airn together side by side, and though the hardship might come on um, praised be to God, they'd never heed it, when left to wan another."

Martin faintly smiled on his wife, as she thus tried to cheer him, but drops of blood came as it were distilled from his heart, when he thought of the bitter disappointment that awaited her, when she was to learn he was not an acquitted but escaped felon; he had not courage at that moment to undeceive her; she looked so frail, so weak, so incapable of bearing any further misery, that his mind shrunk from the hard task of afflicting her, in that first moment of returning hope, and he put it off

to the last hour, when disguise would be unavailing, acquainting her with his real situation.

Mary and her lover, in some degree shared his feelings. "She'd know the bad news time enough," was the thought of both, and with a sigh for what awaited poor Biddy, they both withdrew from the kitchen; then, leaning over the half door that led to the yard, soon forgot, in the discussion of their own private affairs, the husband and wife they had left talking of theirs, over the fire that had been in compliment to Martin, just renewed by Mary, in the kitchen. It was then Martin informed Biddy of what he had heard in the tent, relative to the intended abduction of Agnes; and which, notwithstanding their own sorrows, pressed heavily on this faithful pair; neither of them were insensible to the misfortune that awaited her, and the consequent misery of her mother and Amy, unless the plot was in some way discovered, so as to prevent its success. Biddy was

for going straight to Drumgar, and telling Mrs. Power or Miss Amy, "the Major had done his worst to them, to be sure, an' he desarved nothing at their hands but the heighth of ill usage ; but 'twould kill Mrs. Power an' break the heart in Miss Agnes. What matther if she liked Misther Nick ? but 'twas n't him she ever thought ov ; t'was wan he'd niver be like—the heir ov Lisfinn ; and sinse she was the height ov a sod or turf, she'd talk ov Misther Gerald the long summer day ; an' now, mavrone, if another was to take her, wan that only cared for her money, 'twould be better for her mother to lay her in the winding sheet, an' sthrike the last nail in her coffin."

Martin perfectly agreed with Biddy in this feeling, and was equally anxious to avert, if possible, so great a misfortune from one who from her childhood had so invariably shewn him and his wife kindness, and in whose welfare they both took a pride and interest that only such affectionate and grateful natures as theirs were

capable of feeling towards the child of the man at whose hands they had received such grievous wrong; but he was entirely averse to Biddy giving any information at Drumgar, respecting what was intended, and strongly urged the necessity of her keeping it a profound secret, until Agnes was actually brought to Bothered Nell's. This he did in order that the Sergeant might be sent to his long account; and Barney, with the rest of the party left behind, after Agnes was taken away, should have time to escape without running the risk of being caught by whoever might be sent to rescue her. That person, it was at length agreed on, should be Sir Maurice Fitzgerald, and that Biddy should inform him at a late hour the following night; first binding him down, most solemnly, not to discover that she had given him the information.

This point being settled, Martin gradually disclosed to his wife the particulars of

his own situation, but without in the least betraying his deadly intentions towards the sergeant: it was the first time in their married life there had been a concealment between them, and a feeling of compunction and shame came over Martin, that sunk his head on his breast, when he listened to his wife's artless plans of seeking, with their one remaining child, a happy home in some foreign land, far out of the reach of the malice of their landlord, or his adviser, Dan; he tried to shake off the feeling, but he could not; he was deceiving her who trusted him so implicitly, and loved him so sincerely, and the remembrance of what they had both suffered, and the absolute necessity of getting the sergeant out of the way, as well for his own sake, as for Corney Mac Carthy's, before the commission came down, prevented him from unburthening his mind to his wife; but he knew her too well to hope that she would either countenance, or assist him in the fell act he contemplated,

and to give it up after his promise to Mac Carthy, and his engagement with Barney, was out of the question, even did he for a moment repent in avenging himself on his enemy, which was far from being the case; all he heard since his return, only confirmed him in his purpose, for it was well-known in the neighbourhood, and publicly boasted of by the sergeant, that Paddy Dooly was responsible for the appearance of Biddy, and that she was liable at any time to be thrust into jail, to answer charges of she knew not what, but such as her landlord and his myrmidon declared would for ever send her out of the country. For her sake then, as well as for any other, the wretched man felt it a sort of private, as well as public duty, to settle matters at once with their common enemy, trusting that when he was removed out of the way, his landlord, losing so bad an adviser, would treat his own tenantry, and the people around him with more kindness and consideration; attributing to this right

arm of Major Power's, what properly belonged to the Major's own head, and had its germ in his own heart; like a diseased member, it might be amputated, but a hand of iron, or of steel, would be found to supply its place, the social evil would still exist, though the particular genus might be exterminated; another and another of the same species would start into existence, engendered midst the policy of his narrow and illiberal, social as well as political creed.

It was with a feeling of relief, Martin heard Paddy Dooly and his party return that night; he dreaded Biddy's perceiving by his manner that he had not told her the whole truth, and he feared his own resolution of withholding it, if she questioned him at all on the subject, but there was no danger of this, the man of the house returned what his wife called *hearty*, but what Father Matthew, we doubt not, would term *blind drunk;* and without waiting to ascertain which opinion was the more

correct, we must candidly admit Mr. Dooly was in a state that would render highly unbecoming sporting a temperance medal, did he possess such an honorary badge; he and his companions gave a noisy welcome to Martin, and after the first congratulations were over the worthy farmer commenced an unconnected detail of what was uppermost in his own mind; his own ejection, in common with that of the other tenants, on the town-land, the approaching first of November; it was no matter, the rent had been paid to the day, the term of the lease had expired, and they had all long since been served with ejectments; it now only remained to put them out, and their landlord had been deaf to every entreaty in their favour, rejected the most extravagant offers made by the tenants, rather than quit the homesteads that had sheltered their children, themselves, and their fathers before them—all proved unavailing, no promise of rent,

however large, could alter the Major's purpose, he was to erect a model farm on Knockanure, rear green crops, and stall feed prize bullocks, and what cared he that over twenty families should be driven on the wide world, without a home ; that the hearth stone of his serfs should be made desolate ; were their feelings or their interests to move the balance one iota of an hair's breadth in their favour, when his own whim was thrown into the scale ; they, and theirs, might have lived, and served, under him and his, from father to son, for generations ; but was that any reason that a man should be prevented from doing what he liked with his own ; did that give them any title to a fixity of tenure, when the expiral of a life, or a day, terminated their lease?

"Surely not," would be the Major's reply, and that of thousands of his class ; and on this recognised principle he acted, kept in countenance by too many of the landed

gentry of Ireland in his day, to suffer the least deterioration in public opinion for this arbitrary proceeding.

Matters standing thus, between the Major and his tenants, it was not in the nature of things for them quietly to submit; where were they to turn to—where seek even a temporary home for themselves and their families? most of them, like too many of the small class of farmers in this country, had been improvident, to use their own figurative language—"When the sun was shining, they forgot to thatch the house, against the rainy day." And now, what was to become of them—they had no reserve to draw on—the crop was seized for the rent of the last gale day—and the cost of litigating the ejectment was sure to swallow what might be left; ruin stared them in the face, and they had nothing for it, but to turn round and face it. Submission to their heartless landlord, made hopeless beggars of them for life, and re-

sistance, either covert or open, might cause a diversion in their favour; upon this hope they acted, threatening notices were served, shots were fired, favorite dogs killed, cattle ham strung, timber cut down, all shadowing forth the fatal doom that awaited their landlord, unless his discarded tenants were granted renewed leases of their land.

Paddy Dooly was a larger holder, and in somewhat better circumstances, than any of the other tenants, and, for this reason, was looked on as a leader and spokesman amongst them, though he was suspected of having something "warum in the heel ov the ould stockin'," still ejection from his land was to him equally ruinous, as to the most distressed tenant on the town land, for where could he look for another farm half as comfortable as his own, that he lived in, man and boy, for over sixty years; and even were such to be found, could he, with any safety, offer for it, much less take

it, did any other member of the community lay the most remote claim to the land; the signing of his lease would be his own death-warrant—the Rockite bye-law that decreed it, neither to be murmured at nor opposed.

Paddy then bravely determined to hold by his own to the last, and encouraged the other tenants to a similar line of conduct.

The landlord, as is usual in such cases, was only half blamed—"his bad adviser was the one on whom to wreak their vengeance, particularly as it had oozed out, that the sergeant himself had offered for the land, and had even high words with his master on the subject, for Mr. Wetherell, like other great characters, sighed for a writ of ease, wishing to repose beneath the shadow of his own fig-tree, in the declining years of his life, to turn his sword into a pruning hook, or, in other words, to seek 'midst the profits of agricultural speculation,

some recompense for the dirty work he had from time to time performed in his master's service. This, however, did not meet with the Major's mind. In the first place, he could not do without Dan; and, secondly, his visions of gain, from the green crop system, were too brilliant, not to shut his eyes and ears to anything that could be urged by even the sergeant in the promotion of his own interests; it was his invariable rule to overlook all others, it was one he could only resign with his life, and he made no exception in favour of his faithful Alcibiades, This, however, produced no mitigating clause in the sergeant's sentence, "an offer was as good as a blow," and he was to be dealt with accordingly; Paddy and his friends' opinion of the matter, adding fire to the flame that rather burnt than slumbered in the breast of Martin, and with his purpose strengthened, it was near morning when the party separated, supper being first served; and shortly after, he and Jem Sul-

livan betaking themselves to the hay-loft outside; there both to sleep, and the former to hide until the following evening, Paddy Dooly and his household retired to a late rest.

CHAPTER IV.

THE MAJOR AND HIS OWN MAN.

At breakfast hour the following morning, at Drumgar, a family party were seated round the table. It consisted of Mrs. Power, her daughter and niece, while the master of the establishment having breakfasted, with hasty strides stepped backwards and forwards through the apartment; his countenance, never calm, now much ruffled, shewed evident symptoms of recent irritation, while, from time to time, he regarded the silent party at the breakfast table, with a look, so painfully observant, as to ren-

der to them, the meal more than usually uncomfortable. It was one they all dreaded, for it was an hour peculiarly set apart by the Major to reprove, rebuke, and exhort his household; and his hallucinations, on those occasions, if not the most instructive and edifying, were certainly truly comprehensive. No subject connected with domestic matters was left untouched; no fault, however venial, escaped unreproved; no omission, however trifling, overlooked—all passed in review at this early parade, before the mental eye of this rigid disciplinarian; and his family sat down defore him, each morning, as culprits to be *jawed* at, for the misdemeanours of the day before, no matter how innocent they might each be of having given the most distant cause for complaint; the bare fact of their very existence and appearance at the breakfast table, ensured, to a certainty, a condemnatory lecture for the day that was past, as well as a prohibitory one for that which was to come.

On the present occasion, Mrs. Power's pallid cheek grew still paler, as from beneath her downcast eyelashes, she stole a glance at her husband's face, and saw there the storm that was brewing, with a vague, indefinite dread of what direction it might take when bursting; her worn out and gentle nature sinking at the prospect of a domestic hurricane. Her child looked wistfully in her face, swallowing with forced composure a few mouthfuls, while Amy's calm and dignified glance gave a kind of moral courage to both, borrowed, it is true, but still something to carry them through an impending scene, they all three felt the petty and vexatious tryranmy inflicted on them from day to day; but Amy alone could brave or resist it. In the heart of the free-born girl there was that which rebelled against her uncle's daily petulant reproof, amounting to domestic cruelty, towards herself, her unresisting cousin, and her broken-hearted aunt; and it was not at all times, that Amy submitted to his

dictation or invective. Her Aunt's imploring looks generally restrained her from offering remonstrance or opposition, but her heart, nevertheless, revolted from submitting tamely to his tyranny or caprice.

"Why was it," she would indignantly ask, " that any single individual should be given the power, by common consent, to make so many fellow-creatures unhappy; what created their tormentor, but the unchecked career of oppression both public and private, he was permitted to run."

These sentiments were expressed to his wife and daughter, and half suspected by the Major of being entertained by his niece, and his craven nature visited doubly on them, what the natural dignity of Amy's mind prevented from being inflicted on herself ; her very presence had, in some degree, a restraining influence on his temper during these morning lectures; and it was only after she had left the room, or was occasionally absent, that his biting sarcasms, and bitter upbraidings, were

freely exercised—it was this circumstance that retained Amy at Drumgar. She loved her aunt and cousin with all the tenderness and devotion of her nature, doubly endeared to her by the unresisting helplessness of theirs, that exposed them, so unmercifully, to the low-minded tyranny of him who ought naturally to be their best protector. She saw her aunt gliding gradually to an early tomb; the worm had attacked the gourd for many a day; but she still lived on for her child and Amy, and though she felt within herself, she was rapidly travelling to that "bourne, from whence no traveller returns," she would fain close their eyes to her danger, and pass the brief time, left with them, like a momentary gleam of evening sunlight—its brightness undimmed by no foreboding cloud of the melancholy future.

Amy had long since read her aunt's thoughts, and a tacit agreement existed between them, that they should not be shared with Agnes. There was something

in the buoyant glee of her happy nature that served as a barrier to keep off the common ills of life; the thousand petty annoyances, by which she was surrounded, recoiled back on those who created them, without inflicting one wound on her young, joyous heart, to see those she so entirely loved—her mother and Amy—happy as herself; and by her side, her father might growl his best. The shadow his anger left on that mother's brow, she was there to kiss away; and Amy would be still her companion and friend—what cared she more? how could they, then, dispel the illusive day-dream she lived in? how could they quench, in sorrow and tears, the innocent joy that sparkled in her soft blue eye? or pale the conscious blush that crimsoned her girlish cheek? No! Mrs. Power felt that her days were to be but few, and Amy was anything but sanguine, still both shrunk from the cruel task of inflicting misery on this young, unsuspecting heart one hour sooner than it could

possibly be avoided ; nor, however irksome and unpleasant her own situation, could Amy contemplate deserting those she so truly loved at such a time ? No ! Come what might, she would remain with them to the last, though her proud spirit was often sorely tempted to seek, by her own exertions, a home amongst strangers, rather than submit to the churlish bounty of such a man as her uncle. Friendless as she was, and knew not but that she was also pennyless, for the Major took especial care that she should be kept completely in the dark as to any property she was entitled to, and his dread of her discovering his duplicity and kvavery in the matter, frequently restrained him from carrying matters too far, lest his vexatious annoyance should drive her to seek another home, and, in time, become acquainted with her rights ; besides this, there was something in the calm, dignified composure of Amy's manner, that if it did not awe the Major, shamed him into something like better

conduct when she was present, which always broke out with greater violence when this temporary restraint was withdrawn, and caused him to feel, towards his niece, a mingled feeling of dread and hate.

As he now paced the room, there was no lack of both in the fixed gaze he bent on her, as he stopped abruptly before where she sat, drawing from a breast pocket, at the same time, a folded letter, and turning the direction to her, demanded, in a stern, but somewhat agitated voice,

"Was she acquainted with that handwriting?"

Amy looked attentively at the characters thus presented to her, and without being able to say, where she had seen them before, felt nearly certain they had been familiar to her, at some one time or other of her life, it was, therefore, with some hesitation of manner, she replied—

"She could not exactly say, but she

thought it was likely she had seen them before."

"Likely," repeated the Major, in an angry tone. "Can you positively say, whether you have or not, if one of your sex can give a direct answer; if you have ever seen it, it must be within the last week; and I warn you, Miss O'Brien, not to attempt any deception with me."

The colour mounted high on the cheek and brow of Amy; and as she was about indignantly to reply to this not very flattering speech of her uncle's, she caught an imploring look from her aunt, and a beseeching one from Agnes, that silenced her, for the moment, and passing over, for their sakes, what was offensive in his speech, she calmly answered—

"That she had not seen that handwriting within the last week, but that she was equally certain she had seen it before."

"Where and when?" was the next interrogatory.

But on this point Amy could not give any information; and the Major insisted it was because she would not.

Again and again, she looked at the direction—it was to "Charles Power, Esq., Drumgar." Her uncle's name was Joseph, and he kept too firm a hold of the letter to see anything more. The hand was a peculiar one, and the more she examined it, the more convinced she felt that she had seen it before, and this she expressed, without any hesitation, while her interrogator eyed her with the most intense interest.

"You are a woman," he, at length, said, in a contemptuous tone, as Amy puzzled over the back of the letter, "and that is enough—the first of your sex deceived mankind—and it is not the fault of any of her daughters if they don't do the same; however, you'll not trick me into believing that you are ignorant of who the writer of that letter is. Mrs. Power," he added, turning to his wife, "it is my positive or-

ders, that neither you, nor either of those young ladies, shall go out of this house to-day; and mind, if any person calls, you and they are to be denied."

The submissive wife bowed her head in acquiescence, and her lord and master strode out of the apartment, giving, as he went, a further mark of his displeasure, in banging the door violently, a favorite exercise of his, and one that never failed, of totally upsetting, for the day, the nervous system of his dying wife. He went direct to his favorite apartment, where Sergeant Wetherell was busily engaged, when he thought his master employed discussing his breakfast, deciphering sundry epistles that had arrived that morning by the post, which, after being read by the Major, had fallen on the ground, or lay scattered on the table, in the centre of the room—this was an indulgence the sergeant enjoyed, vastly; there was nothing connected with his master, or his affairs, hidden from his eyes; and he had t h

great advantage of time to make up his mind before being legitimately consulted on any affair in hand.

The Major's perturbed manner that morning, after post hour, awakened, more than usual, the curiosity of his observant lacquey; he saw plainly, that some unexpected and disagreeable news had arrived; but no letter, he had examined, gave him the slightest clue to suspect what it was. Since his proposal for Knockanure, there had been a falling off in the confidential consultations, that formerly occurred daily between master and man, each feeling a mistrust of the other, the Major considering the sergeant's expectations from him as most extravagant, and out of the way, while Mr. Wetherell, on the other hand, deemed his services gone for nothing on so niggardly and ungrateful employer, inwardly determining, however, to pay himself, the very first opportunity. He had thrown himself frequently in his master's way, that morning, in the hope of

of tempting him to share his secret with him, if such it was, the natural cunning of Dan suggesting that the more he enjoyed his master's confidence, and knew of his affairs, the stronger hold he would have on him, when the time came, to press his own services and claims; but the Major was not communicative that morning, and the sergeant had nothing for it, but to wait, with a smooth brow and disturbed brain, either the voluntary or surreptitious revelation of the matter; he was not doomed to wait long, for, disturbed by the Major's step, he made a hasty retreat, flinging down the letter he was reading, and was in time to meet his master in the passage, with a very composed and business-like countenance; when that gentleman, with a very significant and impressive look bade him "follow to the study." Mr. Wetherell's first thought was, that there was some arrangement on the *tapis*, relative to the coveted land, and that his assent was to be purchased in some way

day or other, the expression of his master's face forbade him concluding it would be at all a profitable one to him, and he hastily cast about in his own mind, what terms he would accede to, before he gave up his self-originated claim on Knockanure; the Major, in the mean time, had entered the study which we, in another place, described, and motioning to the Sergeant who followed him to shut the door, he unfolded slowly the letter, on the identity of whose direction he had questioned Amy so very closely.

"Sergeant," began the Major, "you must know every letter that comes into this house."

The sergeant thought it but fair he should; yet for appearance sake was about to disclaim any wish for such knowledge, when his master went on—

"You are the person who receives them from the post-boy, and you ought to be able to tell me now, whether Miss O'Brien

has ever received a letter directed to her in that handwriting."

The sergeant looked attentively, first at the direction, the Major turning up the back of the open letter, for his inspection, then gradually slipping it from his master's hand, to his own, he glanced, with a very innocent expression of countenance, at the other side, humming and hawing, all the time, to take up attention, while he made himself master of the signature at the bottom of the page.

"Well, I can't say—but I might," he muttered to himself, "and yet, after all, I don't think I ever did, though it's like the scrawl of some of the officer chaps that used to be writing bits of poethry here, for Miss O'Brady,"

"Like your granny," cried the Major, in a vexatious tone ; this reference to Mr. Jennings being particularly ill timed ; his treatment from Nickey, the nurse, the day before, being an additional cause of dis-

quiet, endangering, as he feared, the continuance of the depôt station at Ballyvoyle.

"What put such nonsense in your head? —I am at no loss to know who was the writer, but I want to know, has he ever written to Miss O'Brien, to your knowledge."

Amy received so few letters that this question did not at all puzzle the Sergeant; the handwriting of any she did receive, was well known to him, and amongst them, never appeared anything at all resembling the piece of penmanship now under consideration; but he was too wise to admit his ignorance on the subject, without first ascertaining what his information would be worth; and again closely scrutinising, the direction, he confessed himself. "Sorely puzzled, but if he had time to think over it, could tell, to a moral certainty."

The Major snatched the letter, impatiently, out of his hand, telling him, "he

had no time to wait until his memory returned, unlocked the brass-clasped desk that stood on the table before him, and was about to deposit, in safe keeping, the mysterious epistle, when the sergeant, thinking it a pity to lose so favorable an opportunity of ascertaining its contents, declared his utmost willingness to tell all he knew of any letters Miss Amy had received, for many a-day; that it was an impossible thing she could get one without his knowledge, and he could give a very fair guess of who wrote them; that the handwriting was like, and still it wasn't like, wan letter in particular, she got, about a month ago, but whoever it was, he could'nt know much about her, when he directed his letter to the Major, "Charles Power, Esq.," sure thim that didn't know him by the name of Major Power, knew, at all events, his christian name was Joseph, and couldn't be much acquainted with the family."

"Not if it were to me, he wrote the let-

ter," returned his master, "you are out in your guess, sergeant; the letter never was intended for me, and the writer was not in this country a month since."

"Oh, that alters the case, sir," returned Dan, more anxious than ever, to know its contents, "maybe it's from some of the De Burgh's, blood relations to Miss Amy, that always lived, I hear, in the greatest style, in foreign parts."

The signature of "Walter de Burgo," that caught the sergeant's sharp glance, at the bottom of the page, supplied a hint for this suggestion.

"Far worse than that," said his master, as he took a hurried turn across the narrow room; then seeming to have come to some decision in his own mind, he stopped short, and faced the sergeant with a look that told the disclosure was coming, but, by no means a pleasant one. "You dare not, even if you would, betray me," he said, as if speaking his own thoughts aloud, "from me you may get something, but O Brien,

or De Burgo, or whatever he is now, would visit, with a vengeance, your trap for nurse Mooney's daughter; you might give him back his own daughter, and break me horse and foot; but you wouldn't be one shilling the better of it. He, nor she, nor one of his followers, would ever get over that you swore Biddy Sweeney out of house and home."

"And who did I do that for, Major?" said the sergeant, demurely.

"For me, Dan, I admit," said his master, "and for yourself too; for you never liked a bone in her or her mother's skin, and you're not the man to forget an old grudge in a hurry."

"Nor to betray my own master," said Dan.

"True enough; particularly when it wouldn't do yourself any good, sergeant; but now you can serve both of us to some purpose, by helping me to get that confounded girl out of the country, before her father knows where she is. I hardly think

he has written to her, for that letter is addressed to her uncle, with whom he left her, and that's dead, I don't know how many years ago; so that he must know very little of what is going on; and yet, I couldn't judge, from her manner, an hour ago, whether she knew his handwriting or not; she said she was positive she had seen it before."

"That might be," said the sergeant, "for the, Mooneys that nursed her, had family papers, and it was likely she saw them, when a child, though she couldn't remember now, where."

"But it might strike her, on reflection," said the Major, "and that is an additional reason that something now must be done, and those very papers you speak of, should have been taken, long since, from Biddy, who got them, I suppose, after her mother's death."

"I looked for that same, Major, long ago," said the sergeant; "they were burnt, I suspect, that night in the kiln. I could

learn as much from Bothered Nell, that heard it from Barney that used to be company keepin' with Martin, that time he was hidin,

"I often thought you could turn that same Barney to good account," said his master, thoughtfully, "and in this present business, he might be of great use to us. an he be trusted?"

"Why, not to say trusted," replied Dan, deliberately, "he knows everything that's going on in the country, and is not idle himself; and yet, I tried to come round him many a time, but he was as slippery as an eel. I'd think he'd be jist tellin' us everything sweet as new milk, an' the next minnit he'd be as black as iver."

"I wish you had left him on the treadmill, three years ago, when you persuaded me to get him made a liberty man of, until his time was up; he and his old granny were, I fear, a bad importation into this part of the country. She'd tell everything forsooth. that was going on, and as yet there has never been a single conviction on her information."

"Being hard of hearing is against her," replied the sergeant, extenuatingly, "She tells as much as she knows, an' I don't fear yet but Barney will be brought round, an' at anny rate, what could I do when she found me out, and threatened me so hard, if I did'nt get Barney out of jail that time, an afeared she'd blab to him wan time or another. I thought it better to settle um somewhere near me."

"The way he could hang you, in your own part of the country," said the Major, sneeringly.

"No fear of that," returned the sergeant quickly;" though she is my own mother, I'd fasten the rope round her own neck first; but Barney is the last she'd tell. He doesn't know but he's her own son, an' never heard a word of his own mother, or what became of her."

"You could enlighten him," said his master, complacently; determined to remind his faithful Dan, he was somewhat in his power.

"That's past and gone, Major, an' if the old woman made away with her, I was n't to blame ; I was n't near her at the time."

"You could leave directions, Dan," added the Major, with a smile closely resembling a malicious one.

The sergeant, however, was not to be moved.

"A foolish old woman's doting, no one but a fool," he said, "would listen to. She was his mother, and he could'nt fight with her ; but he never recollected even a word of what she accused him of happening ; and as to putting out of the way Barney's mother, no one would believe she ever did it—she that was so fond of Barney, and he her own son, Barney himself, and every one else that knew them would say he was."

"Grandson you mean, sergeant," said the Major, in a provokingly ironical tone, "surely you would'nt give up your own right to so amiable and well-conducted a son."

"What's the good of all this, Major Power," said the sergeant, in a sturdier tone, than he had yet used; his master's sarcasms, at length throwing him off his guard, but without having the desired effect of intimidating, "You know as well as I do the history of Susan Hanmer, Barney's mother. We'd have been man and wife six weeks after I first met her at Northampton; but you yourself, sir, told me you'd countenance no married man in the regiment. She may thank you for what followed; an' when I did send her to Ireland, to my mother, who was it bid me do it, sir, I ask you? Was it anny fault of mine she died, after Barney was born —wasn't I with the regiment, an' who prevented me owning him from that day to this, but you, yourself, Major; an' now you'd throw a slur on me, an' be the first to take away your servant's character."

"Not I, Mr. Wetherlel," said the Major, laughing, well pleased that he had hit upon

a subject that, as he expressed, it "pinched Dan's corns," "not I, in the least, I would'nt for the world insinuate such a thing. It was only your own mother that once accused you, before me, of telling her to smother, or choke, or some such thing, a young person of the name of Susan Hanmer, that you married, or pretended to marry, some thirty years ago; but that's now of no consequence, and shall be entirely forgotten, if you give some useful assistance at this present emergency, and help me to get rid of Sir Walter De Burgo's daughter, before he comes down here to claim her."

"Sir Walter De Burgo?" echoed the sergeant, in amuzement."

"Yes," repeated the Major, "Sir Walter De Burgo now; Captain O'Brien when he deserted his child, nearly twenty years ago and left her as a legacy to her mother's family, to be claimed now, when he has a handle to his name, and wants a property to support it. His next step will

be to set up her claim to Drumgar, and I have not a leg to stand on, if it goes to trial: he and his daughter must gain the suit; for the property was settled on her mother, in case the brother, Charles Power, the very man that letter is addressed to, died without issue. He never was married, and my only chance now, is to put that unlucky girl out of the way before Sir Walter becomes aware of Charles Power's death, which he evidently is not at present from that letter, thanking him for his kindness towards his child, expressing the greatest possible wish to see her, after so many years of wandering, as he calls it; he says beside all this rigmarole," continued the Major, glancing his eye over the open letter, "that he has only returned to this country, within the last week, and that on his arrival in London, he found Lord Attlebury, with whom he had served in India, and who for years had been his most intimate and attached friend, just on the eve of starting for Ireland as Lord Lieutenant;

and that he was induced to accompany him as his private secretary, so our only safety is in dispatch; Sir Walter, if he's made at all of the same stuff of the Wat O'Brien I once knew, is not the man to yield an inch of ground to the enemy, and years don't make a man supple, besides, with such influence in high quarters, the government at his back, and his daughter once allowed to tell her own story, I'd soon be sent to the right about, and what then, sergeant, was to become of you!"

"Oh! whatever was to become of me, I'd stand by you, Major, to the last; lave it to me, and I'll soon put Miss Amy from disturbin' your title, an' thin I hope, your honour won't dhrive a hard bargain fur Knockanure; sure you wouldn't grudge wan that sarved you faithfully a thrifle to back um in their ould age, an' little paice or aise I've had in my day; an' my mind does be throubled whiniver I think ov Barney, an' if I could settle him an' myself down at Knockanure wance, it's little

wild oats he'd have to sow, or little they'd thrust him ; he's jist the boy to take possession without axin' the tenants' laive, an' wance in, they'd be cuter than I take um fur, if their wicked best would sarcumvent us both ; not a man among um, but he could send across the say, so I'd be bound they'd keep a civil tongue in their head ; if your honour would give us a joint laise of the town-land."

The Major listened attentively, offering no interruption to Mr. Wetherell's eloquence, nor could that gentleman perceive any opposition to his wishes, when his master next spoke ; on the contrary, they seemed, if not actually acceded to, in terms understood as granted, though the wily landlord, it must be confessed, was more resolved than ever to reject them, when his own purpose was accomplished; the hobby of the green crop system, sweeping away the sergeant's claim of service, as well as any ulterior bad consequences that might threaten him from a refusal, he trusted to

his own cunning; that so often had done him, if not good, well-timed service, to extricate him, in the present instance, from any unpleasant consequences; and, in the meantime, hit upon an expedient to get his turn served, and at once gratify the sergeant's avarice and ambition for his son, without either sacrificing his own wishes, or property; he commenced by representing, "the great, almost certain danger any man ran, in taking the land, about to be ejected, over the heads of the present occupiers, and that to such a man as Barney, the danger would be trebled, as they would consider him betraying their interests, in which his own had heretofore been identified; that he would be sure to receive no quarter at their hands, but that this was the sergeant's look out, not his; for if he continued obstinately blind to his own, and his son's interest, he should have a lease of the land, but must take the consequences on his own head; on the other hand, there was now a very fine opportu-

nity of providing for his son. And the conditions were not very hard—his son would be all but a gentleman, if he complied with them ; he had only to marry a lady, and take her out with him to America, and never return to this country, and his fortune was made ; it would not be difficult he should think, to get him to agree to this, and if he either demurred, or attempted to return what lay secure in that desk," pointing to the brass clasped one, before mentioned, "would at any rate make this part of the world too hot for him, and reduce him to proper order."

The Sergeant at once understood the nature of the service required, from Barney, as well as the allusion to what the brass-clasped desk contained. It was the dying declaration of a man, who some few months before, had fallen a victim to that sanguinary code of justice, of which Barney was the instrument of execution, suspected by his own party, of outbidding secretly, a neighbour, who was twelve

months before ejected from a farm of some six or seven acres, of which more than three were bog; after being served with due notice by order of this secret tribunal, and still persevering in looking for the land, his case was handed over to Barney to undergo the extreme penalty of rockite law, which was duly enforced, one fine evening, not quite dusk, as the man was returning to his own home, from market, with a "naburin' boy," for "a start on the road, jist to keep him company."

Half a dozen slugs, the contents of a blunderbuss, were lodged in his side, not far from his own house, but a few moments before, a gentleman and his servant rode up to the place, from off a cross road; the man's large frieze coat prevented the slugs from proving instantaneously fatal; he lived for nearly an hour after, and Major Power carried home in his pocket his dying information, witnessed by Sergeant Wetherall. Why the "naburin boy" was never brought to justice, this upright

magistrate's respect for the paternal feelings of his servant, must explain ; how long those feelings might last—did he or his hopeful son contravene this upright magistrate's wishes on the present occasion—was a subject for the sergeant's grave consideration ; and without losing any time in deliberating, he warmly thanked the Major for the great interest he had taken in Barney ; promising for him the most cheerful acquiescence to his plan of establishing him, (Barney,) in the Transatlantic world. "While it would be jist the thing for Miss Amy, that was always talkin' about a free-counthry ; the sarvants id be as good as hersilf, there, an' she wouldn't be wan taste above her own husband, that could lock her up, or thransport her to the back settlements, if she spoke wan word ov comin' home."

Her worthy uncle grinned approvingly on his faithful and sagacious Dan, and it was then agreed that the latter should see Bothered Nell, without any delay, and sound

her on the subject, disguising, however, from her, one part of the treaty, that of Barney's being obliged to quit the country for ever; this the Sergeant deemed necessary to secure her co-operation; knowing that her attachment to Barney was much greater than to himself; he was to her, as the child of her old age. When deserted by her own son, she was obliged to remove to a distant part of the country to escape the odium attached to an informer's wife; when her husband was sent out of the country here she lived under another name, and it was at this time Susan Hammer was consigned to her care, with directions, that she should not outlive her approaching confinement. Barney was born, and his wicked grandame extended to him the mercy she denied his mother; to avoid suspicion, as well as indulge the restlessness, induced by her crime, she moved still farther into a wilder district, and here Barney was brought up as her own child; their precarious existence car-

ried on by the exercise of her talents at divination, and the sale of a "sly dhrop behind the dhresser."

The Sergeant gave her no clue to find him out, and she was deterred from returning to the neighbourhood of Drumgar lest her former neighbours should recognise her, and give her anything but a flattering welcome.

Years rolled on, and the life of indulgence and idleness Barney led soon threw him into the very worst company around — he was quick, active, ready witted, and not unambitious, without the restraint of any one single principle; these qualities, in a mind subject to no control, eminently qualified him to excel in all that was evil; while his cunning protected him from detection; but it failed him on one occasion; when his zeal against an obnoxious faction led him, with some others, to way-lay a principal leader on his return from a funeral, the man was, to give their own account of the matter, "Bate within an inch of his

life, an' let carry it home with him afther." This they had cause to regret; for he prosecuted Barney and his compeers, at the next quarter sessions, for an assault; the assistant barrister, for the time being, considered regular exercise, and a moderate regimen, infallible in producing a reformation in manners if not morals, so transmitted Barney to the treadmill, there to tramp his rounds for the next twelve months, and to acquire, during the intervals of his daily perambulations, a thorough knowledge of any vice with which before he was only partially acquainted. The improving society he mixed in, during the first six months, was attended exactly by the consequences that might be expected; Barney's genius, no more than his legs, was not idle during that period; his punishment was to take his daily walk on a sort of revolving staircase! but his pleasure, when released from this rotatory exercise, intended for improving the feet, but not the head of "young Ireland," was to congregate with his

lawless companions in the corridor attached to their ward, and there to impart and receive instruction and information on many subjects totally unconnected with the moral improvement or social civilisation of mankind—our rulers, no doubt, thought otherwise, when they disciplined the body with this whirling educational course, deeming the *stand-still* system best suited to slaverise, not develop the mind; but though temperate diet, and a hard trot, may restore the biliary system, when disarranged we have some reason to doubt its efficacy, as a specific, when applied to the moral and social disease of our unhappy land.

While Barney was thus incarcerated, Bothered Nell undertook a pilgrimage to Clonmel, as well to see her hopeful boy as to hit upon some plan that might release him, before the twelve months were expired, from durance vile; it was with some trepidation she presented herself at the massive iron gate of the jail, and enquired for

"Wan Barney Maher!"—the name she had substituted for that of Wetherell when, five-and-thirty years before, she had visited the same prison, and bade adieu for ever to her good man; amidst the execrations of the mob, as he was just starting on a preparatory trip to the hulks at Cove, *en route* to his final destination, Botany Bay; his *better half*, on that occasion came in for a share of the scoffs and jeers with which the Clonmel boys treated the "ould informer" as they saw him a bit on his way out of the town; for his fellow convicts there was sympathy in every face, they looked on; but for him, none said, "God bless him;" from the ragged urchins to the burly, well-to-do shop-keeper, who strode from behind his counter, with an aldermanic strut, to sneer, at his shop door, at the hand-cuffed felon on whose oath once the life of many a fellow creature depended, but now, whose perjuries shamed even those who bribed him to transport for ever such a miscreant from the land; all rejoiced in the justice of his

sentence, mitigated as it was from what he so justly deserved, and the partner of his crimes, as well as hitherto of his fortunes, wisely withdrew from the popular outcry against him and his race ; and now, after a lapse of so many years, made her appearance, not without some fear of being recognised—but of this, there was no danger ; time had swept away most of her acquaintance, and had equally obliterated, from the memory of those who survived, all recollection of the "informer's wife," now transmuted into "Bothered Nell."

After some delay, she obtained the wished for interview with Barney ; and, on her way to the corridor, where he was confined, encountered her long lost son, the sergeant. It was his voice first that attracted her attention to him, as he talked to a turnkey in company with his master in one of the passages, and that voice she never could forget. Many a long, weary year had passed since the sound of any

other had penetrated the hearing organ of the old woman, and she now screamed with joy at finding, as she thought, her deafness gone, and her son restored to her at the same moment; but it was not so —no other voice but his was heard; and the first accents addressed to her, in answer to a claim on his former acquaintance, was a coarse denial of having ever seen her before.

Bothered Nell, however, was a match for him in duplicity and cunning; and asking to speak one word with him aside, whispered in his ear what brought from the sergeant an immediate request to retire with her to a private apartment, telling his master, at the same time, that she had some valuable information to unfold, which she would only consent telling him when no other person was present.

The officials, standing by, at once led the way to a room, where they could not be disturbed, regarding the sergeant as a very active personage in bringing more

grist to their mill; and the Major, sensitively alive to the advantage of private information, offered no objection, taking, however, the precaution, which his mistrustfulness of all men suggested, of being sufficiently near the door, where the secret was to be told, not to lose, if possible, one word of what was going on. What he did hear, placed his faithful Dan, from that hour, completely in his power, for Bothered Nell, irritated and enraged by being denied by her own son, used no measured terms in calling to his recollection the fate of Susan Hanmer; and the Major chuckled, with much glee, over the crest-fallen sergeant, when his virago parent, at length, extracted a reluctant recognition from her dutiful child; he thought this a favourable opportunity to make his appearance, ; and after sundry explanations and recriminations between mother and son, a treaty, offensive and defensive, was concluded between the parties at the intervention of the Major—

the leading features of which was absolute silence on the part of Bothered Nell, as to any affinity existing between her and the sergeant ; his son Barney to be kept in profound ignorance of his relative position to both, until it was his father's will and pleasure to acquaint him with the matter; that in lieu of this wholesome restraint on Bothered Nell's tongue, she should have Barney restored to liberty as soon as possible, and a place provided for her and him, by the sergeant, in the neighbourhood she formerly lived in, on conditions that she should give due information to him and his master of any Rockite matters that might come to her knowledge—a thing not unlikely from the previous habits of Barney ; but that he (Barney) should, on no account, suffer from any such private information ; but, with a protective license from these, his patrons, should be free to embark in any deed, however sanguinary, or illegal.

The Major congratulated himself much on the sagacity that dictated this latter

condition ; he should now have a key to all the outrage and depredation committed in his neighbourhood, and a fair opportunity of signalising himself as a very active and efficient magistrate, fully entitled to a deputy lieutenancy; and that, at no greater cost than a mud cabin on a barren heath, and a closed eye and ear, to the mal-practices of one individual, whom he would use, as a decoy duck, to ensnare wild fowl of the same genus, who might make their haunt within his jurisdiction. To evince his good faith in the transaction, before he left the jail that day, Barney was promoted into a *liberty man ;* his accustomed promenade on the tread mill given up, and permission to wander at large through the jail, merely giving his parole of honour he would not attempt to escape. There was no danger of this, for the lounge was too pleasant a one to Barney, to forego it idly. What he had failed to acquire in his own ward was aptly learned in his free access to others ; and by the time he joined Bothered Nell,

in the abode provided for her, by the Major, he was eminently qualified to take a leading part in any midnight legislation going forward, and was soon promoted to that rank, where a quick eye, nimble finger, and unscrupulous mind are absolute essentials to attaining excellence.

CHAPTER V.

FORTUNE TELLING—AND FORTUNE TELLERS.

With so much of the worthy sergeant's character revealed to our gentle readers, they will be in some degree prepared for his secret thoughts. After quitting his master's presence, a wide field of ambition lay before him—not only Knockanure, but the Major's whole property, was all but within his grasp. On Barney was centred his best hopes. Hitherto he had been deterred from acknowledging him as his son, from the hardened and reckless life he led; that, along with his dissolute companions,

would be sure to prompt him to prey on his father, if once discovered ; and though instinct, or nature, or what you will, made him regard Barney with a greater degree of favour than any other individual, still the restraining fear of so desperate and so unprincipled a person, having a natural claim on his purse, caused him, from time to time, to defer revealing their mutual relationship.

The time had now arrived when he might do so, with safety to himself and profit to both. He joined heartily and sincerely in the Major's scheme of Barney's taking off Amy to America ; but was far from concurring in the propriety of his remaining in that country ; once she was his wife, he was fully entitled to Drumgar, and, in fact, all the landed property the Major now enjoyed. Nothing easier than to return with only a dying declaration, locked up in the brass clasped desk ; and the Major's testimony to prevent him ; the Sergeant grinned horribly as his thoughts, arrived at this point. If the expression of his eye at

that moment was to be interpreted, short time would be allowed for any declaration his master might wish to leave; and in the mean time, his thoughts dwelt on how his own interests could be best secured. A lease on Knockanure was what he most coveted for himself—it was the good to attain which he had plotted and planned for many a year; and now the life had dropped, the tenants were ejected, the Habere, on the eve of coming down; and the sergeant ground his teeth, and inwardly swore a lease for him should be perfected, and he put in possession, come what would. To see Bothered Nell was next his object, and secure her co-operation in secreting Amy, until she was removed out of the country; and with this intention, he took the road to Moylerstown, where the races were still going on, and where he would be sure to find his old mother—and have an opportunity of discovering his plan, without observation or interruption;

on the other hand, his worthy parent was equally anxious for an interview ; but she dare not go to Drumgar, lest she should awaken the suspicion of Barney and his companions, particularly as the former had latterly been very jealous and watchful to prevent much intercourse between her and the sergeant ; and it was only at a fair, or market, when she could slip into a tent, or public-house, where he was, that they ever met, and then only a few words were exchanged, unintelligible to the standers by ; but containing a warning, or private hint, for him, for whom they were intended.

This species of intercourse was kept up, on Bothered Nell's part, more to show her adherence to a contract, the observance of which she considered was ensuring the protection of Barney, than any real, genuine wish she had to discover his associates, or gratify the Major and her son, by such information.

Barney, however, was beginning to be afraid she would be induced to tell too much, and without exactly prohibiting those interviews—not wishing entirely to forfeit all claim to the Major's protection—discountenanced them so much, as to deter her, on the present occasion, from risking his displeasure, by seeking a direct meeting with the sergeant, trusting to some lucky chance, to either see him or convey a message of warning before the day was over, or, if none such offered, at all hazards, that evening, giving him timely intimation of what awaited him.

At times, the old hag thought of informing Barney, of who he really was, and thus effectually preventing his taking his father's life; but she shrank from avowing herself as the murderess of his mother, and doubted her own power of concealing from him the horrible fact, if once closely questioned, as she knew she

should be, by him, on the subject; besides, the crime that Barney alone looked on with abhorrence, the crime he avenged with most good will, she had been guilty of; her information in former years, as well as her husband's, had sent their accomplices to their long account; and how could she stand before the child she had reared, the only earthly being who did not cast her off, who would acknowledge one tie in common with her, with this traitor brand on her brow. No, to conceal from him, bad as he was, the history of such a life, she would let the son, who scorned to own her, die by his hand, rather than lose the one remaining link, that bound her to her species.

The sergeant, after his arrival at the course, was not long in making out the tent he was in search of; and watching an opportunity, when the great concourse of the lookers-on assembled, were gathered in crowds around the winning post, to witness the success

of a favourite horse, rode by a popular rider, he suddenly, after loitering in its vicinity, for some time before, turned into the tent of Bothered Nell.

The identical grey cloak that had screened Martin and his companion the night before from observation, now was thrown full length across a line not far from the entrance, enabling the sergeant to reconnoitre the interior without being himself seen. It was not empty; the decrepid owner was standing, if that term could properly be applied to an attitude in which the body represented a half moon; the back so completely bowed as to render the head nearly invisible to any person standing behind the old woman; a short petticoat, the ground work of which was a faded brownish stuff, embroidered with sundry patches, differing in material and colour, thickly quilted together, formed her nether garment; beneath it appeared a pair of pipe-stopper sort of shins, perfectly shapeless in their attenuation, dressed up in old black

stockings, without feet, well known to ladies of Bothered Nell's rank, under that euphonious designation, "*Thraweens*," a pair of iron looking brogues answered the purpose of socks and buskins; a speckled kercher, instead of cap, confining her frizzled, elfish looking locks, while a loose sort of bed-gown, displaying as many patterns of chintz, as an ancient hexagon quilt, completed the *tout en semble*. She stood beside an old decayed chest, on the lid of which appeared a cracked tea pot-of that despised porcelain called the "*conraghy*," from which she poured into a dilapidated cup a sooty coloured mixture that answered all the purposes of Congou: this, after being duly sugared from the contents of a brown paper that stood beside the tea-pot, was handed, with much ceremony, by the old hag, to a blooming looking girl that sat on a three-legged stool, with one elbow partly leaning on the chest, while, with her other hand, she took the cup, and casting a look of grave anxiety and some disquietude, into

the face of the wrinkled old being that stood before her, drank its contents without speaking. There was something dramatic in the expression of either face, at this moment, as well as in the broad contrast they exhibited, in appearance, to each other; the younger with that charm which attaches to early youth, could boast of much sweetness and rustic beauty; in the countenance of the elder, there was no vestige of either, if they had ever existed; the lines were hard and revolting, puckered into a thousand wrinkles by the angry collision of evil passions, that even in extreme old age had not deserted the furrows of her parchment looking brow and cheek; amidst features so unprepossessing, shone out dark, flashing eyes, unnaturally bright, for the decayed sockets in which they were set, their piercing gaze tempered by the shadow of no eye-lash, painfully convinced the looker-on that he or she would have cause to regret being the object of their quick, furtive and

malicious glances. Perhaps some feeling of this kind operated on the mind of the young girl, as, with a deep sigh, she returned the emptied cup to Bothered Nell, giving her, at the same time, a deprecatory look, to avert the undefined evil that hung over her own mind, and which she dreaded, the next moment, being confirmed by the withered lips of the old sybil.

"Ha!" cried the old woman, cautiously draining the cup so as to extract any moisture that remained amongst the dregs at the bottom, "he won't throw a dhrop ov dhrink over his shouldher, an' see, the black speck, come along with id, an' a taste ov the stalk, you'll have to put up with a word an' a blow, my good girl, from your *Boohilleen bawn* afore ye die."

The young girl slightly coloured, while she attempted a faint, incredulous laugh that her over-wrought feelings rendered indistinct.

"The *meeyaw* must come on him first,"

she muttered to herself, "afore Jim Sullivan gives Mary Devaan the hard word or bad usage."

The old hag eyed her intently, as she turned the cup round and round, withdrawing her attention from Mary's face, when three impassive circles were described, then, looking curiously and fixedly at the black marks, left in the hollow of the cup by this revolving process, compressed her bluish, lifeless looking lips, into a vice-like screw, which threatened Mary that whatever revelation of her fortunes was gleaned by a perusal of the cup, the secret was to be confined to Bothered Nell's own head, unless she was able to produce what might extract it thence. Slowly and reluctantly, Mary untied a knot in the corner of the handkerchief she wore inside her cloak, and released a sixpence from the temporary confinement, while she half ejaculated a prayer for pardon, for the sin she was about committing, in bestowing it on Bothered

Nell for so unhallowed a purpose. The old hag received it with a grumble, while her eyes shone out brighter as her fingers closed on the coin, "Only she brought her the grain ov tay, an' it was wet an' dhrank, sorra a word she'd tell her for the likes ov that; an' at anny how, she couldn't tell much, if she didn't get anither to the back ov id, a *thackeen* ov a sarvant girl, couldn't offer her less, not to say, a dacent wan, that come ov a good stock, who warn't beholdin' to sarvice; an' if she airned her bread at silf, it was a good place she had ov id, full an' plinty, an' no stint, a *Maulyeen* ov whate, id nivir be missed off sich a barn-floore, an' she wouldn't b'leve the priest, wid the vestment on him, if he tould her Mary Devaan come to the races dipindin' on a taisther."

Mary looked somewhat ashamed of herself, and her errand; but tossing her head as she stood up to depart, while pride struggled with shame in her heightened

colour, tying the strings of her cloak at the same time, turned an indignant glance on Bothered Nell, as she said,

"You may be able to tell me what's afore me, good woman; but you nor anny body else couldn't lay the weight ov that," tossing a crumb of sugar, she raised between her finger and thumb, from off the chest indignantly into the air, "to the charge ov me or mine. Paddy Dooly's barn may be full, and his cupboard too, an' more ov that to him an' his wife; but what have I to say to aither, but to have an eye to their substance, an' airn my bread in dacency an' honesty—if I come to ye this mornin' in throuble about a boy, I all as wan as gave me hand and word to, that's no raison to put ye'er comhither on me for another body's share, I've enough ov me own, an' to spare; but it wasn't me forthin I wanted ye to tell —that's settled, whether or no; but 'twas whether Jim would come in for blame for taking off Miss Agnes for Misther Nick, an' I thought a sixpence id pay ye for that,

as much as a man gets for a hard day's work; but now let me home with good news, an' I'll nivir grudge to double the money."

This offer was at once closed on by Bothered Nell. Most of what Mary had said, was fully comprehended by her, from watching the motion of her lips; and this observant faculty of hers, was an additional proof, to those of her own class, that she was gifted with supernatural powers; and could tell what passed, whether absent or present, as well as scan the future, by the assistance of a few tea-leaves, or a greasy pack of cards; her deafness was admitted by all; but that her eyes should supply the want of her hearing powers, never once entered their imagination; and it was now with implicit faith in her supernatural agency, that Mary bent her whole attention on the next words that should fall from her lips, as the old hag again scanned closely the mysterious cup, with a view to enlist Mary's influence with Jim, in pre-

venting his assisting at the intended murder of her son.

"He's bint on mischief," she, at length, said, after a pause, that caused Mary's heart to grow sick within her. "An' there's a crass in the journey that's afore him; if there ain't a stop put to him before the sun rises and sets agin, he'll be rubbin' his eye-brows, to could iron—there it is," she cried, pointing out to Mary a piece of tea-leaf that stood out more prominently than the rest. "Nobody could mistake it, an' a handcuff, not very far off."

A spasm of terror passed across Mary's face, as she gazed over Bothered Nell's shoulder, at these fated symbols of her own Jim's impending ruin in having anything to do in taking off the heiress. After all, was that to be his end—her boding and anguish-struck spirit pictured a gallows amongst the black dregs, she so intensely gazed on; but she dared not give utterance to her thoughts, lest they should be con-

firmed by the witch-like being beside her.

"I tell ye, Mary Devaan," she cried, in an ominous tone, that curdled the blood, in her companion's veins, "that unless a woman stops him, an' she's here, on the gap, sure enough, he'll do a deed, afore the moon goes down, that'll swing him on a gibbet, the last day of her next quarther."

Mary groaned, and marked devoutly the sign of the cross on her fair but clouded brow; the action was quickly observed by Bothered Nell, who seemed to have the rare faculty of seeing before, behind, and around her at the same time.

"There's an end to it, now," she cried, flinging the dregs in the cup on the ground; "ye spoilt me luck for this day, any how, you an' ye'er *padhreen*; the chapel-yard, *avich*, is the place for ye to bless ye'ersilf in—laive it alone, when nixt ye come lookin' for a *pishogue* for ye'er sweetheart."

And withdrawing her spiteful gaze off Mary's disturbed face, she hastily gathered up the tea-pot and its appurtenances, removing it, them and herself, to the neighbourhood of three sods of turf, that smoked, but could not be said positively to burn, at the farther end of the tent, muttering, as she went, curses, not loud, but deep, on all "who'd ivir thry to bilk her ov her dhues."

Her auditress had no intention of doing so, for she followed closely on the heels of the old woman, vainly apologising for her unintentional act; while she used every entreaty and persuasion she was mistress of to induce the oracle to divulge the particular evil that threatened her lover; offering, at the same time, a shilling, instead of the promised sixpence. This increase of fee, was a kind of propitiatory sacrifice, to appease the old hag's rage, at being so unceremoniously interrupted at her unhallowed office; Bothered Nell, however, chose to be deaf to all that could be urged;

first, however, securing the money, then, cowering over the smouldered fire, placing the tea-pot on the heated ashes in front, drew a short blackened pipe, from a greasy looking old wallet at her side, and applying the end of a lighted sod to the half-filled bole of her smoking apparatus, puffed away with the grave composure of a Turk, in solemn divan, totally unmoved at the burst of anguish that came from Mary, when she saw the hopelessness of extracting any further information on the subject.

"Oh! Jim Sullivan," she cried, in an impassioned, despairing tone of voice, "sure, I might aisily know what was afore ye, whin last night, in the dead hour, ye come to me to laive in me keepin' the *Agnus Dei* I stitched up for ye, in the finest ov Spanish leather, as good as Aisther twelvemonth since, whin they wor givin' out from the althar ov Ballyvoyle; sure, whin ye parted with that mark ov grace, 'tis nothin' good ye wor about. Oh, Mother

ov Heaven, keep us an' save us from all morthyal sin, an' don't let his be chalked agin him afore the blessid relic is wance more about his neck."

"An' what hendhers you from puttin' it there?" cried Bothered Nell, from the corner. "More sinse in that than to be crawthumpin' an' keenin' as if the berrin' was gone; there's time enough between this an' night, to come up with him, an' thin, *Alanna ma chree*, blame ye'ersilf, if ye lose sight ov him."

This advice was not thrown away upon Mary, for hastily drying her eyes, and drawing the hood of her cloak forward, so as partially to conceal her face, at the risk of crumpling the lace border of her full quilled cap, she wished her companion, "a good luck to ye;" and pushing the grey cloak aside, made the best of her way out of the tent, all but in time to encounter the sergeant, where he stood out-

side, he having slipped out after witnessing her first preparation for departure. She had not left many minutes, when he was in possession of the three-legged stool, seated in close conference with his worthy parent—the grey cloak freshly adjusted, so as partly to shade themselves, yet, at the same time, giving a commanding look-out on the entrance of the tent—they both gave way to a subterraneous sort of laugh, when the sergeant complimented the ancient lady on her lucrative gift of divination. It was such a laugh as the arch-fiend may be supposed to indulge in with some favourite henchman of evil, when he gulls a short-sighted child of earth with the baubles of time in exchange for that peerless coin, an immortal soul ; differing in degree, but not in sentiment, was the cachination of mother and son, as they dwelt on the intrinsic merit of the value received by Mary Devaan for her one and six-pence.

"I had my own raison, for tellin' her what I did about Jim Sullivan," said the old crone, handing her companion the lighted pipe. "She'll put a stop in his gallop, I'll be bound; an' if he's out ov the way, may be, th'others would let you alone to-night; but Dan, *agragh*, you must look to yeersilf, they're sworn to tak ye'er life; an' this very night, the job was to be done."

"You dont' say so!" cried the sergeant, completely thrown off his guard, his mind pondering on what had dropped from Mary about the taking away of Agnes.

"I do," returned the old hag, "an' give ye fair warning, too, an' signs on if I didn't hear it, I saw it with me two eyes Martin; Sweeney's broke jail, bad luck to the lie in id, an' what more warnin' than that would you want?"

The sergeant had started to his legs at the suddenness of this news. The errand that had brought him was forgotten; the

necessity for transporting his master's niece; or what he had just heard of the projected abduction of his master's daughter, the aggrandioement of his own son, all was not thought of; at that moment, the prospect of ruining Biddy Sweeney and her husband was uppermost in his mind. Like the unaccepted Pharisee of old, he began with thanksgiving.

"Thank God," he cried, nearly breathless, "I'll now be able to hang him, at last, an' iv ivir you hope for mercy, here or hereafther, ould woman, tell me the whole thruth, now."

"Blow the word more I'll tell," cried Bothered Nell, looking up at him, with an air of defiance. "Take care ov y'ersilf, that's all, that's in id, but I'll niver betray *him* that is n't afeered or ashamed to call me his mother."

"Not a hair ov Barney's head 'ill be touched," said the Sergeant, with much vehemence. "It's Martin Sweeney's neck I want to fasten the rope round, an' if ye

hilp me to do that, you'll nivir want bit or sup for the rest ov ye'er life."

"Aisy to give it to me, for the time I'd be left in id," muttered the old woman, with a scornful grin playing round her toothless mouth. "Barney Maher is the boy that id soon finish his ould mother, if he caught her meddlin in his consarns; he'd smather her brains aginst the wall, I tell ye man alive, as soon as he'd look at her, if he thought she'd betray him, or his commarades."

This fact the Sergeant was aware of, nor could he extract from his affectionate parent any more on the subject, but that an attack was meditated that night, to take his life, and from her great reluctance to tell the particulars he guessed pretty accurately Barney was deep in the matter; coupling this, with what had dropped from Mary, relative to "Misther Nick," taking off Miss Agnes, he felt completely puzzled, and determined on immediately

returning to the Major, and consulting with him on what was best to be done, first questioning Bothered Nell on the intended abduction, of which she was, or appeared to him to be, completely ignorant, but admitted that Nick O'Brady with Frank Mandeville, and Nickey the Nurse, had been in the tent the night before, but as she did not see them speaking she could not tell what they said, nor could she give any clue as to where Martin Sweeney now was; he had left the tent the night before, with Jim Sullivan, and was to be one of the party that night, and in lieu of this information she received the Sergeant's most solemn assurance that Barney should be neither fired at nor taken a prisoner; on this condition, only, did she tell what she did, and crossing her arms so as to form the blessed symbol of our salvation, by these withered members' contact at the wrist, with flashing eyes, swore—

"Be *that* cross, an' be the wan that's

carried afore the priest, at high mass, if harm comes on ye, Barney Maher, ye'er own father 'ill swing for it, an now do ye'er best Dan Witherill, for it's Bothered Nell knows where to find ye'er marks an' tokens."

CHAPTER VII

IRELAND AND THE IRISH.

THERE was feasting at Lisfinn; hill and valley reflected the bonfires of a grateful tenantry, lit up to greet their future landlord to the home of his fathers; Gerald Fitzgerald stood once more within its ancient halls, with a heart keenly alive to the gratulations of a devoted, single-minded people, to whom, in the memory of the oldest, his race had been benefactors; their enthusiastic cheers now told that the tie was not broken; it had been mutually responded to for years, and the kindling eye

and flushed cheek of the object of their present joyous welcome, as he stood uncovered on the steps of his own portal, told that an answering chord had been struck within him, and that the *thiernanogue* (the young lord) would prove no degenerate son of the Geraldine.

"What a noble, grateful hearted people to live among!" was his exclamation to Colonel Saville, that evening, as the two friends, with Sir Maurice, sat, after a late dinner, sipping their wine.

"To live for Gerald," interposed his grandfather.

"Aye, sir, to live for too, as well as live among, and what a wide field for exertion; to develop the energies of such a people, represent fairly their claims, their wrongs, their years of suffering, their unheard of privation, only equalled by their unrivalled patience, is, I confess, a noble ambition, worth dedicating a whole life to; were there no other guerdon to be won, but the homage of such true hearts as welcomed

me back to-day, years of toil in their service would be more than repaid."

"Yes," said Colonel Saville, laughing at what he considered his friend's enthusiasm, "and get a shot from behind a ditch, for performing this *devoir* to your country, when you chanced to offend any of the Rockite gentry in your neighbourhood; you might be as great a patriot as Hampden, or your own Grattan, but, unless you submitted to be ruled by their laws, your best safety would be in getting out of the kingdom as quickly as you could; or, if you chose to stay at home, ride about your own demesne like a champion knight of old, in shirt of mail, bullet proof."

"I deny the necessity of either," replied Gerald, "let the landed gentry of Ireland merely do their duty by the tenantry, and they will, for ever, put down white-boyism, Rockite-ism, and any other ism. Let the people be fed, by calling into action the exercise of native industry; then they will not have to envy the pig,

that pays their rent, the comfortable bed and board, their abject misery denies to themselves and their children ; take away their poverty, and you take away the germ of their discontent; educate them to value the blessings of civilisation, and good order; let every man amongst them feel that, in the laws they are called on to obey, their own interests are identified, that the minister of those laws is a *justice*, in more than a name."

"Gerald is right," said Sir Maurice, regarding his grandson, at the same time, with a look of honest approbation. "If our rulers had been guided by these just principles, a century since, they would not now have to complain that we are a stiff-necked and rebellious people. If they had not helped us to the statutes of a penal law, we should have been this day in advance of England, or coping with her, to say the least."

"Impossible, my dear sir," said Saville, with a characteristic pride, purely English.

"Your country, peopled as it is, with a domestic horde of organised banditti, bitterly, though perhaps covertly, opposed to an impoverished, idle-minded, and if you will, oppressive gentry, let it be governed by what laws it may, could never attain the high commercial position of England, the national integrity of a country, whose word is a bond to the rest of Europe."

"I detract not from her virtues, from her advantages," returned Sir Maurice; "but I stand up boldly, for those of my own land. You see her in the present day in a state of moral collapse, paralysed by the misrule of centuries; who can say, if in the morning of her first subjection to your happy England, the same laws, the same privileges, were extended to her, that her people would not now be as free, as enlightened, as susceptible of all moral and social improvement as the denizens of any other country on the face of the earth."

"Surely, my dear Saville," said Gerald, turning to his friend, following up the argument of Sir Maurice, "you do not consider us Irishmen mentally incapacitated to receive free institutions, besotted and blinded by our ignorance and misery, so far as not to improve under them. Is it the intellectual capacity of the people that's a stumbling block to social improvement. Search the archives of other ages, the college, the senate, and the bar, at the present day, and you will find names identified with Ireland amongst the learned, the wise, and the good. Does our country or our climate debar us from rising in the scale of civilisation? or enjoying the blessings of a remunerative commerce. Look at our western coast, fronting the broad Atlantic, temptingly inviting the American world to barter and exchange her abundant fisheries, never disturbed by a supply of capital—her mines, unexplored by either native or any other company—and her thousand of thousand acres, un-

reclaimed, a barren waste, surrounded each succeeding summer by a starving and fever-stricken population. Is our sun less bright, are our fields less green than yours? Does the corn ripen with a richer glow on your hills? Is the water power of your valleys greater? No! We are your equal—we compete with you in each and all; but we have been ground down, while you have been cherished; the dark cloud of domestic faction, the withering blast of a narrow-minded policy, dried up our energies, our various means of improvement, while those of your country were expanded into life and action by the sunshine of a partial legislature."

These words were pronounced by Gerald with deep emotion, while the eye and hand of Sir Maurice kept time to every sentence he uttered, The old man's thoughts seemed carried far back by the impassioned eloquence of his grandson, and as he gazed on his dark, flashing eye, and calm, intellectual brow, pale as chiselled

marble, hopes that had slept for his country for years, were awakened.

"Youth, such as *he*, must regenerate us," he mentally ejaculated. "The Demagogue may rant, and benefit himself; the cold-blooded politician may tergiversate, and gain a peerage; but hearts only that bleed, like his, for his country, can uplift her from the mire of her misery and wrong."

The effect was different on Colonel Saville—he saw much in the Irish character to admire, much that was meritorious and noble; but his friend's eloquence failed to convince him that the widely spread evil, rife most in the very county he was in, necessarily followed as a consequence to any law, however penal, to any oppression, however unjust on the part of the Government, or landed gentry. The assassinations, nightly committed around, he was inclined to think arose, not from any organised resistance to a mal-administration of justice, or opposition to harsh

treatment, driven to seek redress from private revenge, but to a natural blood-thirstiness in the people, a hatred, of the higher orders, a refractory spirit, subject to no rule, breaking out in acts of violence and cruelty, disgraceful to manhood in its most savage state—he felt, with the executive of the day, that a coercive law, stringent as could be framed, was the only measure calculated to extinguish the insurrectionary spirit of the people, and combatted with much ingenuity, the arguments of Gerald, clearly proving, as they did the fallacy of such a doctrine, by that best of all tests, the experience of past years.

"You may exterminate our peasantry," he argued, "by a curfew act, depopulate our land, and people another hemisphere, with the sons and daughters of the soil; but will you make those who remain, one whit better by the act, one iota less opposed to the coercive law, that filled the hulks with their kindred, one shadow of a shade more attached to the landlords who wring the last

shilling from a pauper tenantry, and then turn them and their families adrift to starve or beg. Will the power to injure, perhaps to banish for ever an offending serf, humanize the gentry of Ireland? Could the private records of every insurrectionary act in force, since the days of Elizabeth, be revealed, perhaps, a faithful clue might be found in the abuse of the delegated power, to oppress, by an arbitrary law, one class of subjects at the despotic will of another, a solution for the vindictive antagonism unhappily existing between the upper and lower ranks of this distracted country at the present day."

"But why was it," persevered Saville, "that since the days of the first English settler, a coercive law was thought necessary to keep the country in any state of quiet or subjection. Surely, if the evil of insubordination did not exist, the remedy would never have been called for."

"We were a conquered people," replied Sir Maurice, "in the first instance; and the

yoke of your proud England was not easy in those days, to bear. On the head of a native Irish was a much less price set than what you generally gave for exterminating a Welch wolf. Those who escaped, of the inhabitants, fled to their mountains, their bogs, their fastnesses; their whole inheritance, wood and water, preserving their language, their prejudices, their undying hatred to the Saxon. England was revolutionized, and her lawless soldiery, led on by their hypocritical general, would try their hand on Ireland. The restoration of royalty was an event not likely to take place during the life of the bold man at their head; but it was looked on as nearly a certainty after his death ; to provide for themselves, then, in this country, was the grand object of this devastating army; and lands were apportioned from the general officer down to the meanest soldier, without any reference to the feelings of the original proprietor; the party in fee was dealt with by a very summary process; and thousands

were thus reduced from comparative affluence, to a state of menial servitude or want Population increased, and then commenced that guerilla warfare, for the possession of land, to which may fairly be traced the agrarian outrages of our own times. England chose to govern us by fomenting internal factions, instead of extending to us equal laws; we were not in a state, it was said, to receive free Institutions, and any that were extorted from her hands, came reluctantly, and lost their remedial effects, by the party spirit with which they were applied. The holy name of religion was the watchword to stir up hatred and heart-burnings amongst us; every man's hand was against his fellow, and every succeeding insurrection was quelled by martial law, without one drop of oil being thrown on the troubled waters, that fomented it. With a commerce crippled by paralysing restrictions, a marketable senate, is it then strange that a people, whose ignorance their rulers never deigned to enlighten;

whose prejudices were outraged, not conciliated, whose affections never were attempted to be won, should in their own wild way, manifest, by sanguinary acts, a continuous resistance to the laws—their poverty,—their misery—aggravated a thousand-fold; the landed gentry became their oppressors, for they, in their turn, were oppressed; lavish expenditure, habits of idle extravagance, absence of all forethought, laid them open to the bribe of any venal senator, who bought their votes with an adequate pension, or place; and to enable them to do this, a tenantry was to be created, a forty shilling interest was to be supposed to exist in every patch of land, their estate was cut up into, let beyond its value, to some pauper, who in right of this territory, enjoyed the privilege of being an independent freeholder of the county, the middle man sprung into existence, to save the large landed proprietor from coming into contact with so insolvent a tenantry; and then rents were raised,

the fever of competition seized the people, war prices increased the factitious value of land. Paddy married, built a mud hovel, cultivated a corner of his farm, as a potatoe garden, to support himself, his wife, and his rising family, with the pig that was to pay the rent; and of an adverse year to this, his only crop, sold the *boniveen*, locked the door, some fine morning, sent the wife and *childhre* to beg, shouldered his reaping hook, leaving the middleman to look for his rent, and returned when the harvest was over, to take possession, and enjoy the sweets of a family re-union; and keep a forcible possession against the will of his enraged landlord, who after nearly two years of litigation, succeeded in levelling the cabin over his head; sending a desperate man loose on the country, with a starving family, without a home. This, my dear Colonel," continued Sir Maurice, "is no exaggerated picture of one of the many evils that has reduced my native land to what it is. I have only to add of

this wretched fraction of a ruinous system, his head landlord knew, and cared as little for either his moral or social improvement as he did about the subjects of the Khan of Tartary; so he met him at the hustings, with a vote, every purpose was answered; and as to the middleman, his whole duty was condensed into receiving his rent on the gale days."

"What a frightful sketch you have given, my dear sir, of the cause of so much existing evil; and how graphic!" exclaimed Saville; "and totally different too, from my own pre-conceived ideas, as well as most of the information I have gleaned on the subject, since I came to Ireland."

"I can well understand that," remarked Gerald, "an Englishman in his own country hears of us but as a nation of ferocious savages, subject to no law but our own lawless passions, redeemed here and there with sparkles of wit and native humour, bold daring, and kindliness of heart—but utterly incorrigible from the very reck-

lessness of our nature, incapable of steady improvement, from our idle habits, and profuse expenditure; he comes amongst us, and sees much of evil on the surface; at a cursory view it strikes him that no man's life is safe in Ireland; he consults those he considers well qualified to give an opinion on the subject, and is confirmed in the idea, and never stops to investigate, himself, whether he is right or wrong. With this *exparte* statement he returns to his own country, convinced that no measure can be enacted severe enough to punish the moral turpitude of such a people."

"Precisely," returned his friend, laughing, "these were exactly my sentiments, and pretty similar, I assure you, are entertained by most of the official people connected with your country."

"I am aware of that," returned Gerald, "but I am also aware, that there is a great movement in the mind of the British public that augurs well for Old Ireland.

Your statesmen, as well as your artisans, are beginning to feel we *might* have been a different people under different treatment; and John Bull, once aware of his error, will lose no time in redressing it. I yet hope to live to see the Premier of England take office only on condition of being allowed to grant full, ample justice to Ireland —extend to her equal laws, municipal rights, and free institutions with that of her sister-land."

"Pass the wine, Colonel," cried Sir Maurice, "and fill a bumper to his health, whoever he may be, and let the improving landlords of Ireland be not forgotten—noble exceptions to those we have been speaking of—who shrunk not from their duty in the darkest day; fore George! they deserve a sparkling brimmer," and, suiting the action to the word, the old knight filled his glass to over-flowing with the good wine, and swallowed its contents with much seeming heartiness of will.

Both the younger men, after responding

to the toast, stood up at the same moment, and Gerald, reminding his grandfather "that the merry faces round the tar barrel, on the lawn, must either soon disperse, or run the risk of being transported, under that mild act Colonel Saville advocated," led the way to the terrace, where it was expected the old knight and his grandson should make their appearance to gratify the originators of the rustic fire-works around. A deafening cheer greeted them outside, echoed back by their well-wishers from the surrounding hills; fresh faggots blazed on every fire within view, while the loud hurrahs of a grateful people rent the air, in wishing long life to the Geraldine.

"There is one voice I miss among them,' said Gerald, turning to the old knight, "and I missed his look of welcome this morning too. What has become of Mac. Carthy More? I hope the poor old man is not ill, or dead."

"Neither," said the Knight; "but you

will say, nearly as bad—He is a prisoner in the county jail—"

"For debt?' returned his grandson, with an air of surprise; then, with some warmth of manner, added—"My dear sir, why was I not written to—Why was he not released before this?—The sum must be a heavy one, indeed, that I would not willingly pay before poor Corney should pine in a prison."

"Fore George! you are the same Gerald that ever you were," returned the Knight, somewhat pevishly, "here you jump at a conclusion upon false premises, in your great haste to assist an old friend, and reproach me for not doing what, if you were here yourself at home, could not be done—discharge Mac.Carthy's debt—He is in for resisting the civil power in the discharge of their duty, and is to be tried under the White Boy act for assisting a wretched outlaw and his wife, to save themselves and their children from being burnt. And if he escapes from that ordeal, our neigh-

bour, the Major yonder, assured me he was certain of transporting him under the Insurrection Act, being caught out, after sunset, in a proscribed district. However, I purpose attending the day of his trial, and shall see what weight my testimony, as to his character, will have upon the jury."

"Impossible, that twelve honest men, on their oaths, would transport a fellow creature for such an imaginary crime," exclaimed his grandson indignantly.

"A coercive law, not a jury of honest men, will transport him," said the knight, "they will only bring him in 'Guilty' of what the law alleges to be a crime, and the judge punishes with a sentence of transportation."

"It all amounts to the same thing," returned Gerald, rather impatiently, "an innocent man is banished from his country for ever; but no private malice shall accomplish MacCarthy's ruin—at least without a strenuous effort on my part to save him."

"The Lord bless you, Misther Gerald for that same word,"—came from a muffled figure, crouching on the steps, leading to the lawn from the terrace where he stood, uttered in a low, sad, but fervent voice, one that was strangely familiar to his ear; yet the identity of which, for a moment, he could not call to his recollection; that he had heard it before, he felt convinced; but its tones then expressed no sorrow, nought but gladness was in its cadences: now how altered, yet bringing back, at one glance, to his mind's eye, the memory of years The bright glowing tints of his boyish love—the fervid devotion of his manhood—the death-bed parting with the only parent he ever knew—and the cold estrangement from her he only loved, all rose vividly before him, embodied as it were, by the sudden tones of a voice heard in earlier and happier hours. Hastily descending the steps on the lower part of which the figure was seated, leaving the old knight in conversation with his friend, he

said, in a low voice, painfully distinct, from inward emotion—

"I cannot be mistaken. You surely are Biddy Sweeney. How fortunate that I should meet you here to-night."

"Thrue enough, Misther Gerald," returned Biddy, "an' you may be right sartin I was sent in id," she added, with much earnestness of manner, "an' if ye'er honour doesn't make haste, she'll be gone afore ye get in id. I'm waitin here for more than the last hour, an' they tould me ye'er honour would be out every minit; but if ye lose much time now, 'twill be too late, an' the young crathur's heart will break within her. Oh! Misther Gerald, if you ever cared one sthraw about her, don't desart her now, but follow me, ye'er honour, an' we'll be with her in no time."

And Biddy started to her feet, wrapping tightly her cloak around her, and set off at a good smart pace, followed instinctively by Gerald. Fogetting in the surprise of

Biddy's address, the enquiry for Amy, that a moment before rose to his lip, suggested by her humble follower's sudden appearance. Now entirely thrown off his guard, he left the choice of his path to his guide. Biddy, seemed to know her way well; for after a quarter of an hour's sharp walking, in which she had neither turned to the right or left, keeping clear of each party round the several bonfires, they approached, at length arrived on seemingly a wide, unfenced road, bounded at either side by a wild heath or bog. Here Biddy drew breath, and Gerald, for the twentieth time during their walk, endeavoured to draw from her an explanation of where they were travelling to; but Biddy's invariable answer was—

"Whisha, *mavrone*, sir, you'll know time enough."

And with this, he was fain obliged to be content, while his conductress, who seemed much exhausted both in mind and body,

renewed the journey at a slower pace and left Gerald to indulge in his own wild reveries of what it might lead to. Yet, he could hardly persuade himself that Amy O'Brien could be so changed in one short year, as to seek an interview with him under such extraordinary circumstances. Amy, so fastidious, so estranged from him before they parted—so coldly haughty in their last interview to seek him out, now, the first night of his return, and that, in a way so little reconcileable to the feelings of a delicate-minded female; the thing was impossible; yet Biddy was so identified with Amy in the mind of Gerald, so associated with the recollection of years gone by, so devoted to her he loved, that the language of this, her humble follower to him, appeared only to apply to her former mistress, and the conscious feeling that his secret had been divined, in some way, by his guide, and by this time, imparted to Amy, accounting for all that was heretofore

inexplicable in his conduct, reconciled him in some degree, to the strangeness of hers in soliciting, under such circumstances, so early and so unexpected an interview—that Gerald's heart whispered, during this walk, that he was loved, we cannot deny, and this one absorbing feeling deadened his calmer judgment to any seeming impropriety in the bold step he supposed Amy had adopted. A strange revulsion, however, took place in his feelings when Biddy stopped suddenly within a few yards of a low built, mud hovel, that he had not before noticed, rendered indistinct by the darkness of the night, until they came quite close to it, and even in broad day, its heath-thatched roof could not easily be distinguished from the bog, where it once grew, on part of which the edifice was reared—so miserable and desolate a spot could not possibly be the *trysting* place chosen by Amy ; and with some sternness of manner, Gerald now demanded of his guide "Why he was brought there?"

"Bekase, sir," replied Biddy, quickly "you an' ye'er granfaather—God bless him—are the thruest friends she has—more loyal to her than her own faather; ye have the power an' the will to right her; a poor *angyishore*, like mysilf, might spend the last dhrop in her body, but couldn't, afther all, save the wounded bird from the *sportheen*. I can only shew ye'er honour where to find her." Then giving a low and peculiar knock at the door of the hovel, she whispered in Gerald's ear, "I lave me blood in the hands of a Figarrald. No fear'ee he sell the pass ov the poorest kern, or highest fellow."

And without uttering another word, quickly disappeared, leaving her companion in a state of much perplexity, as to what would be the issue of so extraordinary an excursion. He was not left, however, long to speculate on the matter, for the door was immediately opened by a decrepid old woman, apparently keeping guard on the

entrance, and whom, now Gerald pushed hastily aside, for his eye caught a glimpse, over her bent figure, of one whose startled glance towards the open door sent the blood wildly gushing through his bounding heart. It was Amy—the Amy he had loved for years—the day-dream of his existence, haunting him, alike, 'midst the marble palaces of Italy, the classic shores of Greece, the seductive saloons of Paris. And now, was that fondly cherished illusion to vanish, by such a meeting in a ruined hut! Was that Amy before him, the same being his heart had so often painted in her calm loveliness, her severe dignity, receiving him after the unexplained silence of years !

Oh! how often, 'midst the smiles of southern beauty—'midst the subtle fascinations of a foreign land, had his heart yearned for the time when he could proudly stand before his first and only love, and uplift the dark cloud a mother's dying mandate had placed between them; receive, after years of

proscription and estrangement an atonement for their cruel infliction, in the returning tenderness of her whose heart, was to him a gem above all price. Was it, indeed, for a meeting like this, that he had shrunk from "the dance of the dark girl of Spain; from the song of Italy's daughter," to meet the cherished one—a maniac,

Such, at that moment, appeared Amy to her agonized lover. A blazing turf fire threw her figure into bold relief, as she stood, apparently spell-bound, immediately before it; her hair hung loose and unconfined, its dark, silken mass of tresses in rude disorder, covering her shoulders, and extending to her waist; its profuse beauty completely concealing the upper part of her dress; the lower looked soiled, disarranged, and torn in many places; forming, altogether, a spectacle that nearly froze the senses of Gerald; but it was the look of wild horror she fixed upon his face, when first recognized by the bright fire-light,

that deprived him of power or motion, unconsciously ejaculating a faint "Oh God!" covering his fnce with his hands, at the same moment, he sunk powerless on the worm-eaten chest of Bothered Nell, that stood close beside him. He dared not look again, but the deep throes of his stricken heart, told that it wept, though his manly eye was unmoistened.

Amy was the first to break a silence that had lasted but for a few seconds, yet to each, appeared to comprise the misery of years,

"Could it be," she asked in a voice of deep emotion, nearly choked by the proud, swelling thoughts that heaved her bosom, "that Amy O'Brien, the daughter of a soldier and a gentleman, sprung from no mean race, was indeed fallen so low, as that her dastard insulter should appear before her, with impunity, after receiving at his hands so foul an outrage?"

Gerald withdrew his hands from his

face, and regarded her with a look of mingled pity and sorrow, no way in keeping with the glance bestowed on him in return; her dark eye dilated, as it swept over the countenance of (as she supposed) the base man before her, with a look of ineffable scorn and haughty contempt; then, with recovered composure and much grace of manner, she bound up the dark tangled hair, that still hung loose about her beautiful but agitated face, and confining it in a large, but not unbecoming knot at the back of her head, revealing to her lover, by this arrangement, its well remembered, purely classical, outline, said, in a tone of bitter irony, with a look of calm dignity on her queen-like brow,

"Your bounty, Mr. Fitzgerald, has provided me with no more fitting dressing room, so you must fain excuse this little attention to my toilette; your paid ruffians are but sorry tire-women."

"Amy," said Gerald, in a voice of stifled

anguish, "this is more than I can bear; you will break my heart;" then standing up, he approached to where she stood, and attempted to take her hand.

"Stand back, sir," said Amy, in a voice that warned him it came from no maniac. "Let us understand each other, at once. Mr. Fitzgerald, I have received insult and wrong at your hands this night, indifference and neglect, for years; but Amy O'Brien has lived to scorn him she once loved." Here her voice trembled, and the ashy paleness of her cheek, flushed for an instant; then, in a firmer tone, she added, while a livid hue overspread her face—"that weakness now is past—our paths through life lie separate—yours is through that open door—and if one spark of manly feeling remains within you, spare my woman's nature the deep mortification of having a powerless arm to enforce this command."

"You shall be obeyed, Amy" said

Gerald, in a deep voice; "but I call my God to witness, that you wrong me; hear me," he cried, passionately, "and condemn me not, for a crime, the very nature of which I am this moment ignorant, let my undying love, my unchanging esteem, plead with you, before I am thus banished for ever."

"Outrage me not farther," cried Amy, in a voice of rising indignation. "Force me not to curse my only parent for deserting his helpless child—driven to madness, by being exposed to the cold-blooded insult of such as you."

Gerald had left the hut—he ran, rather than walked; that Amy's reason had fled, was the thought uppermost in his mind; and to visit on her guardian, Major Power, summary vengeance for the cruelty that must have been resorted to, before she was reduced to such a state, was the next that suggested itself; he neither knew nor cared the path he traversed—by the mere act of volition, he tried to escape from

thought, or disentangle the burning ones that consumed him, leaving his mind a perfect chaos—no settled purpose arose within him, until the parting cheers around the expiring bonfires, recalled, in some degree, his scattered senses, to where he now was, and decided him, on seeing Saville, without any delay, and forcing from Major Power, a full avowal of what had reduced Amy to her present miserable condition, as well as to mete out to that gentleman the punishment Gerald considered he so richly deserved. The dying fires now guided him, in finding his way back to Lisfinn; and as he passed by their faded embers, and his ear caught the last huzzah, in honor of himself, with prolonged shouts of—"Long live the Geraldine!" "May a son never be wanting to the house of Lisfinn!"

Bitter, indeed, were the thoughts of Gerald. Gladly would he have exchanged his exalted but blighted lot with the meanest serf amongst them, returning

with his faithful partner to their humble home; and willingly would he, at that moment, have resigned the proud castle and broad lands that called him heir, to share their meanest hovel, with Amy, blessed with nature's best and noblest gift—reason.

CHAPTER VIII.

A CHAPTER OF ACCIDENTS.

WIDELY contrasted that night were the feelings of Gerald, as he entered the castle, to those he experienced in the morning, when receiving, in its hall, the warm gratulations of his grandfather, and numerous dependents on the joyful occasion of his safe return—then he had looked forward with fond anticipation to what had since taken place—meeting with Amy—his heart sank within him at the retrospection; but he tried to nerve himself

for a meeting now with Saville, previous to that with Major Power, to which he looked forward, with intense anxiety, not only as affording him a just vengeance on the author of Amy's sufferings, but a ready mode, also, of releasing her from the care of the wretched old hag she was, at present, consigned to, and placing her, within the reach of those who loved her, in a more eligible home; with this object in view, he sought Saville, and found him comfortably ensconced in Sir Maurice's easy chair, by the study fire, poker in hand, describing sundry circles in the scattered ashes beneath the grate, seemingly absorbed in his own thoughts, which, from a glance at his manly, expressive face, his friend, despite his own misery, rejoiced to discover, were far from being unhappy ones.

"I am sorry to interrupt you, Saville," said Gerald, hesitatingly, having been for some moments in the room, unperceived by his friend; "but I have something of

importance to say to you—and it must be said at once."

The first part of Gerald's sentence had caused the poker to drop from the Colonel's hand, as well as snap asunder the fairy woof he mentally wove, giving him, at the same time, a very school-boy sort of air at being thus caught wooing fancy's vagaries; but ere he concluded, Saville had started from his chair, and gave his whole attention to his friend.

Gerald's appearance might well have startled him—his dark hair hung in loose masses over his pale and haggard brow, his eye looked sunken and dim, the reaction that necessarily followed his overwrought feelings, gave a look of lifelessness to his whole appearance, while his soiled boots and bespattered dress, added an air of negligence strangely at variance with his usual habits.

"For pity's sake, what is the matter?" was Saville's exclamation, after the first

glance at the figure opposite to him. "Tell me, I entreat of you," he added, more earnestly, alarmed by the looks of his friend, "what it is that has happened —anything to Sir Maurice?"

"No," returned Gerald, almost gasping for breath; "such a night as this, I could not be the savage to inflict on the good old knight one particle of the misery I am doomed to carry to my grave."

"Great God! what can have happened?" rejoined Saville.

"Ask me not now," said Gerald, in a husky voice; "but if all that remains now for me to live for be worth an exertion from my friend, follow me this very moment, without question, to Drumgar."

"To Drumgar," echoed Saville, in a voice of utter amazement, his secretly indulged love for Agnes suggesting the possibility of Gerald's happiness being bound up in the same object.

"Yes," returned his friend, in a tone of greater firmness, "and that without delay,

this very night Major Power must answer to me for the wreck he has made of all my earthly happiness."

"Start not Saville," he added, perceiving the surprised and alarmed looks of his friend, "have no fears for me; I am cool, desperately cool, were I not, I should have sought this interview by myself; but you shall witness that I do nothing rash, you shall hear from his own lips an avowal of his cruelty to one so fair and helpless."

It was Colonel Saville's turn now, to change colour; he took a hasty turn through the apartment, and in that brief walk, all his air-built castles of future bliss, were laid in the dust. Agnes, his Agnes, in idea, a few short moments before, was the betrothed of his friend, no other conclusion presented itself at that moment, else, how should he account for her thus early, after Gerald's return, making him the confidante of the vexatious and petty annoyances, daily and hourly inflicted on her by her father, annoyances that he, from

time to time, by reason of his increased intimacy with the family, had frequent opportunities of observing, and which were invariably passed over in silence by agnes, with a sweetness and forbearance that rendered her as something Angelic in the eyes of her lover. Were all these now to be hoarded up, and confided to Gerald, in their first meeting, as to one who had a right to protect her from even the caprices and ill temper of a parent; well, his secret was still in his own keeping, and the unconscious object of his affections bestowed hers, even in childhood, on another, that other was worthy of her in every way, and as he turned to his friend with an agitated —'I am ready,' there was an honesty of purpose in Saville's heart, never to interfere with Gerald, come what will, even at that moment, midst the struggle of impassioned and disappointed feelings. As the two young men passed through the vaulted passages, leading to a small postern, through which Gerald had entered, their silent

echoes reverberated clearly and distinctly, the parting address of Sir Maurice to the last of the revellers that had been that day feasted in the Castle.

"Go home, my friends," said the good old Knight, "return in peace to your comfortable dwellings, and ere you give slumber to your eyes this night, give hearty thanks to the Giver of all good, for the safe return of him, who is to continue to you those blessings when I am laid with my fathers. The time is not far distant when that must happen." Here a murmur was audble through the assembly, of

"Long life to ye'er honor, many a happy day may ye be spared to us." The clear cheery tones of Sir Maurice were next heard.

"Come when it will, I am thankful; but fore George, before then, I hope to see sons and daughters around my grandson, with hearts to feel for you, and heads to direct you, as good, and as wise as his own."

A deafening cheer was the response.

Gerald rushed into the open air ; he felt, at that moment, in its full bitterness, the singleness of his blighted lot, and this reference to his future heirs and heiresses served not to calm the agitated feelings of his friend; they both pursued their way, rapidly and silently, to where the boat was moored that should take them across the river to Drumgar, and as either oar was boldly plied, sending their flying barque through the water, painful reminiscences were awakened in the minds of both young men, by the associations around. In that very boat, how often had Gerald rowed Amy and Agnes in their almost daily visits to his mother, and now could she look down and see her miserable son the victim of her dying prohibition.

Gerald groaned, " Why was it you did not know the heart of your only child," he bitterly murmured to himself, " and then how much would have been spared to Amy as well as to me."

His friend's thoughts, too, peopled that

frail barque—there he had first held to his conscious heart the insensible form of Agnes; and there its wild throbbings first told him he loved. What recked it now, that it had never before beat for other woman—hers was bestowed on another. And Charles Saville had wounded feelings to bear, as he best could.

"My profession henceforth shall be my bride," he mentally ejaculated, springing on the bank, as the boat touched. Why did I ever contemplate deserting her, for the wayward smile of woman?"

The image of Agnes rose before him in moments of winning confidence, of gentle emotion, when the unstudied innocence of her nature, betrayed to his wrapt senses that he had not loved in vain.

"Fool! Idiot! Boy that I was, to be carried away by my own feelings, without perceiving hers were pre-engaged."

A whole round of musketry now struck upon their astonished ears; but as it came in the direction of the House of Drumgar,

Gerald and the colonel concluded that it was the Major and his faithful sergeant, at a species of night practice they frequently indulged in, of discharging their pieces out of an upper window, merely to inform the neighbourhood they kept a sharp look out.

This waste of ammunition the Major was wont to boast cost him nothing ; for at the disembodiment of the " Gallant Tipperary," he became seized—but not in the legal acceptation of the word—of as many rounds of ball cartridge as would keep up a pretty severe target practice for the rest of his natural life.

As they approached within view of the house, however, the hall-door wildly flung open attracted their attention, and aroused their fears for those inside. It was wont to be so well secured after dusk with bolt and bar, requiring a password for admittance, and then only acknowledged when the claimants for entrance were recognised by the sergeant, in his capacity as warder, from within, that it now struck them that

something serious must have happened, to cause its present unguarded appearance. The rude voices of men too, seemingly in angry conflict, or engaged in hot dispute, issued from the interior of the house. Quickening their pace, both young men rushed in, without waiting to signal their approach by knocking. The voices grew louder and louder, and Saville, breathlessly outstripping his friend, burst into the sitting-room where he knew Mrs. Power and the girls usually sat, every evening. The not yet evaporated smoke of discharged gunpowder, rendered objects in it indistinct to his first glance; but his second revealed a scene which, his cry of horror, told Gerald had unnerved the stout heart of the young soldier,

There sat Mrs. Power, perfectly dead, upright in the easy-chair she usually occupied, the figure of Agnes lay lifeless beside her, with her head resting on her mother's lap—a thin stream of blood issued from the throat of the apparently mur-

dered woman, and oozed down so as to dabble the white dress of her insensible child. The fire blazed brightly, the lights stood unsnuffed on the table, and the intruders into this chamber of death were struck for an instant speechless; and, forgetting all else at that moment, Saville uplifted Agnes—wildly pressed his lips to hers, to ascertain did she yet breathe. Calling on her name, Gerald laid his fingers on the pulse of Mrs. Power, but life was extinct. A look of terror overspread her features, a ball had passed through her throat; but not in a direction that would have caused her death —voices were heard approaching, and the next moment the room was filled with armed men.

"Shoot them, if they resist," was shouted from Major Power, in the rear of the party; Saville's wild exclamation making him aware the room contained others beside the remains of his lifeless wife and child.

"There is one too many shot already,"

said Gerald, in a stern voice; then demanded of those who entered—"Have the ruffians been secured that committed this outrage?"

"Mr. Fitzgerald," said the Major, in a tone of amazement, "I didn't expect this honour," but, he added in his usual sneering voice, "your succour came too late—we were able to dispose of these gentry without your assistance, though I suppose they were amongst the foremost of your backers to-day," he turned, as he spoke, towards two men with their faces blackened, closely and firmly pinioned to each other with a strong rope, and guarded at either side by a double row of sturdy-looking policemen.

Saville had borne Agnes into the open air.

"It wasn't done by us, sir," said one of the blackened men, pointing to the body of Mrs. Power, in a voice of heart-touching anguish, as Gerald regarded him and his

fellow prisoner with a look of loathing for taking away the life of so gentle and unoffending a being.

"Oh, no!" said the Major, in a voice approaching to a jocose one, "you reserved your shot for me; but I was too many for you."

Disgust and horror at the Major's first speech, rendered Gerald speechless. The presence of his murdered wife, was no place to bandy words with him, or make him account for his treatment of Amy; but this admission, that these men had not murdered Mrs. Power, roused Gerald to enquire, with an air of authority, from the police, who stood around—

"By whom the act was committed?"

"It was a chance of war, sir," replied Sergeant Wetherell, answering for the force addressed, "they all fired at the same minnit; there was as good time kept as ivir I heard on a parade day."

"Ruffian!" muttered Gerald; but ere he could add anything more, the Sergeant of

Police, a canny Scotchman, stepped forward, and with the usual prescience of Sawney, after casting up in his own mind a sum total of what the distinguished-looking young man, with his elbow resting on the mantel-piece, might yet be induced to accomplish in his (Sawney's) favour, or *vice-versa*, with the certainty that he was no other than Mr. Fitzgerald of Lisfinn, tendered him a military salute, that might have passed muster at the Horse-Guards, and with a strong northern accent, commenced an apology for himself and his men—

"We were oonder orders, sare, and couldna choose but fire; and besides a that, the information went to say we should find the bloody minded gang in this very room; weel, sare, some of the party took off the twa yong leddies, before we were on their track; and Sergeant Wetherell there, gave the word fire, when we kem to this doore, and ordered the men to lower their hands, and not fire ower heads,

and you see, sare, I could na foresay him, for he kem backed wi' a migistrate's order."

"Not to shoot his own wife and daughter, surely?" cried Gerald, indignantly. "That fellow," pointing to Mr. Wetherell, "deserves to be placed beside these wretched men, and to stand his trial for the murder of that lady and her child for so cold-blooded and cowardly an act."

"March the prisoners off, Serjeant Macdonnell," said the Major, in an authoritative tone. "The next thing, I suppose, Mr. Fitzgerald will attempt to prove that they don't deserve to be hung, when he goes to find my own trustworthy servant guilty of two murders, with one of the party alive and well by this; for my daughter was locked up in a room with me that is bullet proof, when the shots were fired; and my poor wife, who has been in a dying state for some time back, was killed by the fright of seeing these gentlemen and their friends drag her niece, Miss Lucy O'Brady,

out of this room but two hours before she received that shot in her neck. "But come, Mr. Fitzgerald, I must ask you to leave this room; the body cannot be stirred, until the coroner sees it, and in the meantime, I wish to keep the door locked."

Gerald would have remonstrated on the propriety of leaving some female servant to watch by the remains of his wife, but this Blue Beard spouse cut him short by observing,

"That nothing could possibly happen to her there, and that as to his maid-servants, they were under lock and key since dusk."

With a parting look, but not of grief, towards the inanimate remains of Mrs. Power, Gerald left the room.

"To be released from such a brutal husband," he mentally ejaculated, "must be in itself a Heaven."

His object now was to join Saville as quickly as possible, and remove Agnes, at

such a time, from the care of so inhuman a father; if his utter indifference towards her could come under the term care; he now, totally regardless of her insensible state, or the consequent misery on her returning consciousness at being deprived, under such awful circumstances of a mother she so truly loved, continued to give orders about the disposal of his prisoners, as well as take every precaution of preventing an escape or attempt to rescue, in their transit, the coming morning, to the next Bridewell; when he thought Gerald sufficiently out of hearing, he whispered in Sergeant Wetherell's ear,

"Dan, we must bilk this chap, he's worse in our way than Sir Walter himself; the moment he hears she's taken away, he'll scour the country in search of her; at all risks she must be secured to-night, for Nick will never take her off, when he finds out his mistake; but, mind, without any one observing her. It's Barney's only chance, now, to escape a swing."

Gerald made the best of his way towards the outer hall, where he hoped to find Agnes and Saville; and soon discovered, by the feeble light of the lamp suspended in its centre, blown about, by a strong current of air, from the open door, the party he was in quest of, with the addition of Mrs. O'Brady, who, in the language of Lord Ullin, loudly lamented,

"My daughter. Oh! my daughter."

Agnes was still insensible, though her faint respiration gave hope the vital spark had not fled in this death-like swoon. Saville hung over her with a look of unspeakable anguish, while her aunt paced to and fro, utterly regardless of her unconscious niece, with her hands clasped together, and bitterly bewailing her own folly in permitting her daughter Lucy to visit, that evening, Drumgar.

"Sure, I might have known well, nothing good would come of it," she cried, "with that good-for-nothing Frank Mandeville, stuck the whole day in the stable at Kil-

groggy with her brother Nick, and the races going on at the same time at Moylerstown; nothing but some plot of the kind would have kept either of them at home such a day; and I to be fooled then in the evening by my good son, to send her over here by herself on the jaunting car, with some fiddle-de-dee message."

As she concluded this retrospection of her own folly, her evolutions through the hall brought her near the open door, when a figure, who had been propping its jam, addressed her, in a voice meant to be soothing, with—

"Arrah, Misthress honey, don't take on so; may be, it's all for luck she's gone; havn't you two other fine young ladies lift; think ov poor Miss Agnes there, that lost her good mama to-night, and the chance ov as clever a young fellow for a husband as there's in the two parishes to boot, an' be her dada's figary, ov lockin' her up along with himsilf."

"Hold your tongue, Nickey," cried his

mistress, turning fiercely on him. "What keeps you there from taking the horse and car round to the stable? A pretty business it is," she added, "when you come to put in your prate."

Nickey, crest-fallen before, thus publickly rebuffed, muttered something of being shot by the police, as well as some body else, and retreated down the steps, without removing himself far enough to impede the use of his eyes and ears to what passed within the hall; and his mistress now catching a glimpse of Gerald, overlooked her serving man's disobedience of orders, in her eagerness to address the heir of Lisfinn.

"Oh, Mr. Fitzgerald," she cried, in a very dolorous accent. "Is not this a dreadful business? I hardly know yet what has happened; my servant bronght such a vague account of the matter; he was so terrified at seeing one of his own young ladies, my daughter Lucy, (sure you remember her, Mr. Fitzgerald, she had such

pretty white teeth, every one remarked them) dragged out of the house by a dozen fellows, with their faces blackened, that he could give no satisfactory account of how it occurred ; but very sensibly, however, made the best of his way, at once, to me with the horse and car he drove my daughter on here early in the evening, to give the alarm. You may judge the state of distraction I was in ; and here I am, for the last ten minutes, and can't get one word of explanation from Colonel Saville, who seems utterly bewildered about that poor, foolish girl, that had much fitter have her wits about her, and try and be of some comfort to her poor afflicted father. I can't bear the thoughts of meeting the dear, distracted man," her voice now sinking to a whimper, while she applied her handkerchief to her eyes—she deemed it decorous to weep.— "When I think of what he has lost." she continued, in the same key, "but sure it was to be expected; for my poor dear sister,

for many a day, was more dead than alive, and to her, it must have been a great release."

Gerald nodded assent, and would have replied, but that the lady chose to go on.

"You are impatient to be out of this melancholy house, and I don't wonder at it, Mr. Fitzgerald; for I don't think anything would tempt me to go through it this night by myself; when I heard from the colonel you were here, I said, at once, to myself, 'here I'll stay until I see him; he'll be sure to have wit enough left to tell me the true version of the matter."

Notwithstanding the personality of this compliment, Gerald made another desperate effort to break from the lady, and vainly endeavoured to turn her attention to her niece.

"She'll come to, never fear; I told the same thing to the Colonel, when I came in. The more notice you take of persons in her state the worse they always are. It's only a mere fainting fit. But Agnes," contin-

ued she, glancing towards Saville, who still continued bathing with water (that Nickey had procured him) the temples of the insensible girl, "always made the worst of everything; she was naturally weak-minded so unlike any of my girls, her cousins, who never lost their presence of mind, on any emergency."

Gerald broke from her with an air of disgust, and approaching the fainting girl, took her hand, and gently rubbing it between both of his, while he gazed on her death-like countenance, with an air of the deepest commiseration, in a broken voice, said,

"Ah! my poor little Agnes, you have witnessed that, to night, enough to unnerve the stoutest heart, not to say a gentle one such as yours."

Mrs. O'Brady at once saw she had gone too far, and approaching her niece, begged of both the young men not to stand between her and the door, as plenty of air, and being left to herself, would be the best

restoratives, adding, with much mockery of feeling,

"It would be well for the poor thing if she never came to herself. What can she expect now? Her father will marry before six months; and not an inch of the property is under settlement. Poor Agnes! has but a poor look out; her nobles are come down pretty well in one night; she's no longer heiress of Drumgar."

Saville bestowed a glance at the speaker which she was not obtuse enough to comprehend, and again turned his whole attention to, as he supposed, her dying niece.

"Heiress or no heiress," said Gerald, in a voice of some sternness, "the life of Agnes depends on her leaving Drumgar, and having, at once, medical advice."

"I suggested that before, to her aunt," said Saville, in a husky voice.

"Well, really, Colonel Saville, how could you be so unreasonable?" replied the lady, turning full on the Colonel, "as to pro-

pose such a piece of business to me, afflicted as I am, I cannot possibly imagine. Heaven knows, this night has brought trials and disappointments enough to me, without hampering me with a dying girl, not able to stir, taken up with herself; what could I possibly do with her, with all my plans upset, my daughter forcibly taken from me, and my poor dear sister lying dead in this very house, with nobody to give an order about her but myself; how could I take charge of Agnes, when I, and the girls will start for Clonmell the moment the funeral is over. I see nothing to happen her here with her father, and it is the best of her play now to be very attentive to him, for he'll very soon give her a step-mother."

Gerald had left Mrs. O'Brady speaking, when he retraced his steps in search of Major Power, who was still occupied with his prisoners, separately giving them a severe cross-examination. The moment Gerald entered, the culprit under the fire of this self-

criminatory questioning, on perceiving him enter, flung himself suddenly at his feet.

"Oh Misther Gerald," he cried in a voice of the deepest self-reproach, "who'd have thought Martin Sweeney id ever have lived to see the day yee'r honor would come back to scorn him, as a housebreaker an' a murderer, the gallis i'll nivir punish me equal to ye'er look this night, that could only take the breath from me, but the sowl was withered within me, whin I caught your eye, sir."

"Martin Sweeney," echoed Gerald, in amazement, "the man that married Nurse Mooney's daughter—impossible!"

Martinhung his head in shame, and sobbed convulsively.

"Upon my word," remarked the Major, "you have hit upon the gentleman's identity to a 'T.'"

"Wretched man," said Gerald, turning to the supplicant at his feet, "what could have induced you to commit such crime!" Martinstarted to his feet, and fiercely turning

to where Major Power sat, with his trusty sergeant standing beside him, in a voice of uncontrolled fury cried out, while he shook his pinioned arms towards both,

"Him, and him." The effect was electric; both master and man quailed before the impersonation of aroused passion that stood before them, the embodiment of the evil their own injustice and wrong had wrought, but the feeling was only momentary. Martin Sweeney was not the first wreck those hardened men had sent drifting down the rapid stream of ruin, to be swallowed in the boundless ocean of eternity, and the Major dreading what might come next, quickly addressed Gerald.

"You see, Mr. Fitzgerald, the man is not in a fit state to be examined at present, he might criminate himself, and I warned him before not to do that, and he gave a look of appeal to the Scotch sergeant, who nodded assent, but thought to himself the magistrate's questions, rather leading ones, after such a warning."

"You seem to wish to speak to me," he added, turning to Gerald, rising at the same time. "I am ready to attend you to the next room."

"Quite unnecessary, Major Power," returned Gerald, coolly, "I merely wished to solicit, on the part of my grandfather, your permission to remove Miss Power, in her present weak state, to Lisfinn, to remain with us, until the sad associations of this night are forgotten.

"I am extremely obliged to Sir Maurice, and to you too, returned the Major quickly, his countenance brightening. "It was very thoughtful of you both to think of Agnes at this time; and I really dreaded meeting the girl, knowing how she'd take on at the death of her poor mother. Then I'm entirely too occupied, as you see, to attend to her, and shall feel very much obliged, indeed, by your removing her there tonight."

All this was literally true, for the Major was right glad to get rid of Agnes, that

night, for many reasons, and by granting Gerald's request so readily, he hoped to put him in some degree under a compliment, that would prevent his interfering in any way with his captives, which, from Gerald's manner to Martin, he much dreaded ; nor was this fear abated, when, as the former left the room, he heard him say to his prisoner—

"I shall see you again, Sweeney ; but in the meantime, no man is called on to criminate himself."

Hastening back to the hall he encountered Mrs. O'Brady, who had followed him as soon as she perceived his absence, in order that she might reach the Major, under his escort.

"I really was afraid, Mr. Fitzgerald, to venture by myself, fearing that I might come in for a stray shot from some of the horrid men I hear the house is filled with; but I felt it my duty to come over, not knowing what reports might be spread in the neighbourhood, to me and my

family's disadvantage, if I shunned the poor dear Major at such a time."

"It was very kind of you, madam," remarked Gerald, coldly; "but the Major is I believe too much engaged with his prisoners to need your condolence. It strikes me it would be much better bestowed on his daughter, whose immediate removal from hence prevents my offering my assistance in finding out her father."

"Removal," cried his auditress in amazement, "where, upon earth, Mr. Fitzgerald, are you going to take her to."

"To Lisfinn, madam," remarked Gerald, in a dry laconic tone.

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Fitzgerald," returned the lady stiffly, "but you must excuse the feelings of an aunt towards a poor girl, just deprived of her mother. I really must say, I think a house without a lady at the head of it is not exactly the place for so young and inexperienced a girl."

"Its master is a Fitzgerald, madam," re-

turned the young man proudly, "and that is pledge sufficient for the safety of a queen."

"Oh, I dare say," said the lady, "and I am sure I never meant to insinuate anything against you or your family; but I can't be blamed for taking care of my own niece, by any body, and shall hear her father's opinion on the subject." And with a flounce of her skirt, to express her determination, the lady proceeded on her way in search of the Major; while Gerald hastened on quickly to the hall."

"Saville," he cried, in a hurried voice, "we must carry that poor girl at once down to the boat, or else that monster, her aunt, will prevent the Major from allowing her to be removed to Lisfinn; and if she stays here, in her present state, she is lost."

Saville did not lose his presence of mind, but glancing around, perceived a large cloak that constituted part of Mrs. O'Brady's muffling, lying on a seat, and snatching it up, totally regardless of what its owner

might suffer at being deprived of its defensive protection against the night air, hastily wrapt it round the nearly lifeless Agnes, and with the assistance of Gerald, raised the chair she was seated on, and gently bore her into the open air. Here they met with an unhoped for assistant, in Nickey the Nurse, who, at once proffered his assistance of lending a helping hand, and cheerfully took Saville's place by the side of the chair, while he walked at its back, supporting its unconscious occupant. In this order they marched towards the direction of the boat, while Nickey inwardly thanked his patron saint that his master had that night escaped taking away the young lady, he, Nickey now carried.

"He had somebody else's luck along with his own," he muttered to himself. "Whin the Major locked her up, the ould fox, what would he do with her, without as much as wan penny for a forthune, when wance her mamma was gone. Faix, the ould misthress is right, 'tislooking outfor ayoung

wife, he'll be, and then Misther Nick might take a musket with *his*, sorra other end would come ov him ; but now he's clear and clane out ov the scrape, an' these chaps, *mavrone*, are welcome to her, an' me blessing into the bargain ; 'tis proud I am to give her a lift anny road, but the one that lades to Kilgroggy."

The motion of the chair, with the keen night air playing freely around her, partially aroused Agnes from her trance-like swoon ; but it was only to utter a low, indistinct cry, and to relapse again into her former state of insensibility.

They had by this time arrived at the boat, and after their fair burthen was placed in it, Nickey exclaimed,

"Wisha, that's the same melancholy screech the poor young lady gave, when she ran into the room, an' saw her own born mother dead in the chair."

Taking up an oar at the same time, the silence of his companions no way in accordance with his own excited feelings.

"Then, you were there," cried Gerald, suddenly, "and can tell how it occurred."

"Bedad, I was, sir, to me cost," said Nickey, "and an awful business it was, sir, sure enough; bad luck I had to be in id, anny way, an' it happened as foolish as ever you seen, sir. 'Nickey,' sez the misthress to me, calling me up, afther the dinner was over, 'you're to dhrive Miss Lucy over to Dhrumgar, with a message I'm sendin' be her.' With that, sir, I goes out to the stable, an' puts on the harness on the ould black horse—"

"Pass over that part of the story," cried Gerald, impatiently, "and confine yourself to what occurred at Major Power's."

"Oh yes, sir, to be sure!" replied Nickey, yet at the same time bent on telling the story in his own way, "but the raison ov me mintioning the black horse, sir, was to account for me bein' so late; the poor brute was so tired afther standin' the race coorse the whole day."

"But you were at Drumgar when the attack was made," interrupted Gerald.

"Oh! that I was, sir, an' you never seen annything cuter, sir, in ye'er whole born days; the women sarvints wor all locked up, sir, an' mysilf thought there was nothing pertikler in that, sir; the Major havin' such curious ways ov his own, sir; an' Sergeant Witherill, as I thought, sir, was up in the office with the masther, as he often used to be ov an evenin', sir, settlin' the affairs ov the nation, an' cuttin' the workmens' tallies. Well, the garsoon, sir, that's in the stable, tould me all this, an', I like a gom, believed him; but no blame to him, sir, for he heard it himsilf, the sergeant tould him, to put us all off the right scent; well, I was sittin' afore the kitchen-fire, sir, thinkin' ov nothin' at all, whin a knock comes to the back doore. 'Who's that, Pat,' sez I to the boy. 'Mysilf doesn't know,' sez he, 'but annyhow the doore is boulted.' Another knock came. 'Nickey,' sez Pat,

dhrawin' the stool he was sittin' on, up close to the hob. 'Do you thry who's in id, mysilf is afeard.' With that, sir, with no harm in the world in id, I went over to the doore, an' afore I retched it, a dozen men, with their faces blackened, wor a top ov me; the doore wasn't boulted at all, sir, though Pat id take the heighth ov the house ov oaths it was; but the fright, sir, made him see double; with that, sir, up they rushed through the kitchen to where the ladies wor sittin' in the paadler; an' without sayin' by ye'er lave, or as much as God save ye, saized on the two first they met with, an' dhragged um screechin' *mille a murther*, sir, out ov the hall doore; the sight left my eyes, sir, whin I seen um out, what could I do, I lay as good as dead, undher the kitchen table, for over an hour; at last, an' long run, I roused mysilf, an' ran into the room, where poor darlin' Mrs. Power was sittin'; an' there she was, sir, sitting boult upright in the chair, for all the world, sir, like a dead corpse; well,

sir, the fear was put acrass in me, an' out I ran, an' well for mysilf, sir, I did in time; for my bould sergeant wasn't in the office at all, sir, but down at the Polis Barrack; an' there they wor all sure enough, sir, at his back; well, blow the bit, sir, whin they come to the doore I first ran out ov, they let fire such a *few de joy*, sir, as bothered my sinses intirely; an' whin I hear the Major unlockin' his office doore, sir; an' shoutin', whin the Polis took Barney Maher an' Martin, that came in whin th'others left the doore open, lookin' for Dan Witherill, an' seen Miss Agnes there, run like a wild hare, sir, out ov her dada's office, into the room with the dead lady, mysilf cut an' run, sir, for the life ov me; an' knowin' my own misthress ud die, or come over, I charged out to the stable, sir, an' may be I didn't make the ould black horse canther."

"Then Miss Power was not the second lady that was run away with?" said Gerald.

"Oh, not at all, sir," said Nickey, "the Major suspected the whole business, sir, an' laid his thrap cute enough; he had her locked up all the time safe and sound in the room with himsilf; 'twas there the grand mistake lay, sir; they were tould to take two sir, an' 'signs on' they made sure ov' their number, sir, anny how, when they dragged off Miss Lucy an 'Miss O'Brien."

The oar dropt from Gerald's hand; the dreadful interview in the hut with Amy was now explained.

"Great God!" he exclaimed, "can it be possible? But it must. Tell me, good fellow, the direction they took; direct me aright, and your reward will be ample."

"Wisha, I'd do that same, sir, with every vein in my body, without fee or reward, sir, if I knew the laist taste about it," said Nickey, with great simplicity, quaking lest his love for telling a story brought him, as he would have expressed it himself, "beyond the length of his tether,' "but how could I tell the direction they took whin

they were goin' out ov the hall doore as I was runnin' up from the kitchen."

The rest of the journey was as speedily got over as the insensible state of Agnes permitted.

Mrs. Donovan, the old housekeeper, was hastily summoned by Gerald on his arrival and after consigning Agnes to her care and giving directions that a medical man of some celebrity in the neighbourhood should be immediately sent for, he left Saville to explain to the wondering old lady and assembled domestics the cause of Miss Power's appearance at such an hour at Lisfinn, as well as her present seemingly dying state; and enquiring for his grandfather, went immediately in search of the old knight.

It had been a day of much fatigue and great mental excitement to Gerald, but now, as he approached Sir Maurice, there was no look of weariness in his eye, none in his elastic, rapid step. Quickly explaining to him the occurrences that had taken place at Drumgar, and the consequent

removal of Agnes, the old knight was immediately put in motion, and though the day had been a fagging one to him, too, still this claim on his hospitality, late as it was, seemed to inspire him with the same freshness and vigour with which he had set about in the morning, preparing for his grandson. Every restorative contained in the whole pharmacopeia, for the resuscitation of a fainting lady, was by turn applied to Agnes. What Mrs. Donovan's memory failed to supply, Sir Maurice was sure to suggest; and, by the time Doctor Wilson arrived, the poor patient was very conscious and very miserable. She had been previously undressed and put to bed by Mrs. Donovan, who evinced towards her, in her own way, all the tenderness of a mother; and the good old knight had stood sentry at the door, holding momentary consultations with the worthy housekeeper, and hurrying the domestics, as they passed to and fro, charged by their chieftess with sundry directions for sal volatile, pepper-

mint, water, &c., &c. The Doctor, like all Doctors, ordered something. A sedative was Doctor Wilson's prescription for Agnes, and a long and gratuitous lecture on the cause and effect of syncope, was freely administered to Sir Maurice and Colonel Saville; who paced the outer gallery that led to the sick chamber, lying in wait for the Doctor, on his way out with the fallacious hope of getting, what Doctors never give, a candid opinion.

And where was Gerald, after delegating to others the performance of these hospitable rites; had he sought a quiet pillow, weary with the pleasurable and painful scenes of the past day! No, he was the companion of no other than Nickey the Nurse, on a night excursion, armed to the teeth, determined to rescue Amy at all hazards, out of the power of the desperate men who had so ruthlessly seized on her. He had chosen Nickey's guidance on this occasion, for various reasons; by himself he could not hope to discover the hut he had left

Amy in. The night was dark, and his mind was too agitated to mark either the route Biddy took in bringing him there, or that he himself had pursued on his return ; then the chances were against any of the domestics at the Castle having their intellects sufficiently clear to direct him after such a day of feasting ; and as to his own Swiss valet, he would be completely at sea. Nickey was the most natural person then to fix on, and one most likely to guess the locality of the hut he had described, as well as direct him thither. From a less graphic description than Gerald's, Nickey would have been at no loss to identify the cabin of Bothered Nell, with that so vividly now pourtrayed to him by his companion, even were he not fully aware that it was to her hut Agnes was in the first instance to be taken, to be well frightened on her way thither, so that she would hail the arrival of " Misther Nick " with pleasure instead of treating him to a scene ; and, as he hoped, would make no objection to ac-

company him from thence. With much good will, Nickey undertook the conduct of this enterprise, not only for the sake of the gold Gerald pushed into his hand, but as a certain prevention against his companion renewing for that night any acquaintance with Bothered Nell's *whereabouts*, and thus giving her an opportunity of betraying his master, tempted by the same precious metal so freely lavished on himself.

When morning came, Nickey wisely judged that Amy would be restored to her friends, without knowing who it was that instigated carrying her away, he, himself being sufficiently quick that night in giving timely notice to his master of the mistake that had occurred in taking her instead of Agnes—a mistake originating in the absence of Jim Sullivan the night of the abduction, restrained by the influence of Mary Devaan from becoming one of the party, his comrades not as sufficiently acquainted with the indentity of either of

the cousins, and so seizing upon Amy as the young lady they were to carry off; now Nickey hoped that the inference would be, that Miss O'Brien was taken away in a spirit of wilfulness, by the same gang sent by Mr. Frank Mandeville to carry off his future bride; thus the matter ended; whereas, if Mr. Fitzgerald was not misled in a search, he would not be put off that night, his master would be blown, and must take the consequences.

"An' mighty ugly wan's they'd be," murmured Nickey, as he called to mind the expression of Gerald's eye.

The next morning, his master bid an unceremonious adieu to Kilgroggy. The events that subsequently befel him, at some future period, we shall venture to bring before our gentle readers, well-deserving as the future exploits of 'Misther Nick' are to a work peculiarly dedicated to himself.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE PRISON.

Towards the close of a dark, cheerless day in November, half mist, half fog, an outside car drove rapidly through the west gate of the town of Clonmel, attracting, as it passed, considerable attention, as well from the military and parties of police that lined the principal street, as from the crowd of idle by-standers, assembled to stare at the public entry of the Judges, expected from an early hour that morning, to hold a commission that was intended, by the executive of the day, to strike terror

into the hearts of the Tipperary peasantry. The party, whose horse's pace was, in some degree, checked by this formidable array of civil and military force, had nothing in their exterior appearance to attract observation, particularly at a time when vehicles of a similar description were momentarily passing, laden with passengers, no way differing externally from those who now created a murmur of dislike amongst the mob, while the gentleman seated at one side of the car, was duly honoured by a martial salute from the constituted authorities, through which he now slowly passed at the opposite side ; seemingly, his servant, wedged in after the same fashion between two of those living barriers to powder and ball, yclept policemen, exchanged only looks of recognition with Sir Robert Peel's *gens d'armes*, as the vehicle moved on in the direction of the gaol, where a dense crowd of miserable, half starved-looking wretches were kept back from its principal approach, by the *civil* bayonets

in attendance—those of the military not startled from their scabbards, by the powerless advance of so despicable a foe. The repelled party mostly consisted of near relatives of the prisoners, within the dark, gloomy walls, on which their eager gaze was bent. Fathers, brothers, and kinsmen were there; but the majority of that heart-stricken crowd were wives and mothers; amongst them were scattered pale young faces of loving sisters, and still more devoted female friends; but the mother and the wife predominated—those ties sorrow or suffering fail to sever—broken links they may be in the sunny hour of prosperity—but firmer than chain of adamant in the dark day of adversity. The bayonet point scarcely repressed these anxious ones, as the vehicle, we have above described, drew up at the massive, frowning iron gate of the prison, before which paced, with measured steps, a sentinel, whose unmoved look formed a strange contrast with the eager, saddened coun-

tenances of the people as they vainly sought admittance, for the last time, to friends that the coming morrow might sentence to a sudden and ignominious death, or, at best, a living one in some convict land.

There was something subdued and terror-stricken in the faces of the crowd. They were on the eve of a special commission, whose avowed object it was to depopulate their county, or reduce it to a state of peaceful subordination, to the powers that be.

The gaol was full to overflowing; not one prisoner within its walls could hope to escape by the clemency of their judges. They came down to sit as avengers on a people, whose social crimes pre-judged them as beyond the pale of mercy, and whose years of protracted civil war, and domestic bloodshed, insurrection acts had failed to quell, now to be given up to a stern, inflexible justice—a sort of public hecatomb to the manes of the murdered

victims, whose blood called for vengence on the land. The peoples' antagonism with the gentry, beside, precluded all hope of escape from that class were the jurors to be drawn, and scarcely one amongst its panel, but had some refractory tenant to furnish with a warning—some sacrificed friend to avenge. Dismay then seized the hearts of both innocent and guilty, when a commission, composed of such elements, was first announced; and now, as it approached nearer and nearer, backed by all the pomp and circumstance of military array, their hearts died within them at the prospects of consequences so terrible; added to all this, was that inward sense of helplessness—that indescribable consciousness of inferiority, and lack of all legal knowledge, to cope with the most distinguished lawyers of the day, sent down by the Crown to prosecute on this occasion, whilst access to their own friends was denied the prisoners, and an interview with their law-advisers, under such restricted

regulations, as rendered their assistance almost nugatory ; driven nearly to despair, their wretched friends, day after day, supplicated admission, but the command was imperative, that fatal gate revolved only on its massive hinges to admit the *corps dramatique* of civil power, and the living machinery of witnesses that were about to play their appointed part in the coming tragical spectacle.

The party they now opened to receive, were, at once, recognised by many individuals in the mob, and their arrival hailed as an additional evil omen, throwing a deeper gloom on the already darkened horizon of their respective friends.

" Wisha, Biddy *Alanna*," cried a rough coated young man in the crowd, pulling the tattered remains of a grey cloak, whose neck rested on the head of a female by his side. " There's bad luck afore us—look at the car. May I never die in sin, but that's the Major, an' the Sargeant, bad cess to him, at t'other side. It's all

up wid Martin now, sure enough, they'll do his job, an' manny another man's to boot, afore they'll come out ov them walls. The schamers o' the world."

A low, indistinct cry was the only response to Jim Sullivan's intimation; but it no way paralysed the physical energies of his companion.

The next moment, she had rushed past the barrier of police, and wildly flung herself at the feet of Major Power.

"Oh! hear me, masther dear," she cried, passionately, as his body-guard seized on the unfortunate woman, and attempted to drag her off her knees. "Let me spake bud the wan word, an' they may kill me the next minnit. Oh, Major, *asthore*, for the sake o' the mother who bore you, give me but wan sight o' Martin Sweeney, an I'm content to die afore I'll lave the spot. I ax no more but to see him agan, an' lay down my life afther if 'twould plase ye'er honour."

"Martin Sweeney," ejaculated the Major in a slow voice, that expressed less surprise than a wish to arrange his own thoughts, before he denied or granted this request, "you're his wife I suppose; have you seen him since he has been put in; or how often have you been admitted?"

"Never a turn ye'er honour," cried Biddy, eagerly, while a ray of hope shot across her wasted features, "day an' night I strove to get into him, but they tould me 'twas no use, for the ordhers wor stricter against him an' Corney MacCarthy, than ere another man in the gaol; but I knew if I but wance seen ye'er honour, an' you to say the word, the doore would be soon open to me, poor distracted crathur as I am."

"Follow me," said the Major, with an expression of eye that caused Biddy to shudder even at the very moment her request was granted.

"The Lord put a mark o' grace atween me, an' doin' you, Martin Sweeney, harum,

this blessed night," was her inward prayer, as she rose from her knees, and folded her infant child closer underneath the old grey cloak wrapped around her person, obeying, at the same time, the commands of her former landlord.

"Little good he'll do her," remarked Jim to the next neighbour. "I'd rather stay out for ever, an' neer get a sight ov a cummerade than go in, undher his protection, signs on, he nee did a turn yet, be anny body, but to sarve himself an' injure another, by hook or by crook."

"Thrue for ye, Jim," replied the man addressed, "an look at them bloody polis, how they grin and laugh at seein' the poor desolate crathur thrapped be the ould fox; divil a heart at all, thim fellah's have in their body; the Major an' the likes ov him are the white-headed boys wid them chaps, the more he brings to the gallows, the surer hoult them play boys have o' their sitivations."

"Small blame to the likes ov um," re-

turned Jim, "they don't know better, an' hangin' an' thransportin' keeps their pot boilin,' but it's the Major an' his man Dan an' sich as them I'd like to dale out jistice to, they have naithur ryhme nor raison, in harrishin the people as they do, an' if a stop aint put to 'um afore long, blow the wan can live in it, at all, at all—much I'd give um, for what their commissions id do, until they give up thryin' at the wrong end, an' bring the magistrates an' landlords to raison, by makin them whether they would or no, shew fair play to the people, they'll neve be pace 'till that's first done, if a commission was to sit in it from wan end o' the year till th' other."

Without questioning the correctness of the foregoing conclusion, whose logical deduction was perfectly satisfactory to both speaker and listener, we shall beg leave to follow the steps of Biddy Sweeney, as she kept close behind Major Power, who, after a brief whisper with the principal turnkey in waiting, trod the vaulted

passages of the prison, with the easy, familiar air of an old acquaintance, whilst the very echoes of her own foot-falls, within those gloomy regions, convulsed, with an indefinite sort of terror, the heart of his female companion; images of dreadful import rose before her mind's eye; amongst the most prominent of which was that of her husband traversing, for the last time, those long-winded corridors, with the fated rope around his neck, about to undergo a felon's doom, and be consigned to a felon's grave.

"Courage, Biddy, *aroon*," she silently murmured, "sure you'll see ye'er heart's jewel once again, an' can't you be content to die aisy afther."

This feeling overcame all others at that moment, and though the breath came and went, at every gasp, still an exclamation of thankfulness escaped her lips, as her conductor stopped suddenly at a strong-built door at the further end of one of these passages; he knocked and it

was immediately opened by a middle-sized man, with an open, prepossessing cast of countenance, strongly indented however with lines of caution and observation, superadded, no doubt, to the original expression of his features, by the very nature of the situation he filled."

"How do do, Mr. Benson," said the Major, carelessly, as he entered; "come in," he added, sharply, addressing Biddy, who had stood in the open doorway with an expression of dismay and disappointment on her countenance, at finding herself in a different presence to that of her husband. She obeyed, and the Major turned towards Mr. Benson.

"A busy time this, sir, over three hundred in for murder, or conspiracy to murder. They'll be hard set to get ropes to hang them all; if it wern't treating the ruffians too well to give them a soldier's death, I'd have them drawn up in the gaol-yard, and save expense to the country,

and trouble to the hangman, by taking them down in one volley, at beat of drum, by a platoon of musquetry."

"The calendar is indeed a heavy one, I am sorry to say," replied Mr. Benson, handing the Major at the same time a printed list, that lay on the table, where he had been writing before this interruption.

"A very heavy one," he added, "when so many criminal cases were disposed of at the Assizes, I may say, but a few weeks since, however, I trust the case is not so bad as people think, and that numbers will be discharged from the dock, and but few capital convictions after all."

"Really Mr. Benson," replied the Major in a sarcastic voice, "I was not before aware of your liberal ideas on this subject; but, let me tell you, that if one twentieth of the villains, at present in your gaol, are permitted to escape the punishment they so richly deserve, and sent back again loose on the country, there will be neither

protection for life or property, in this county."

"I am aware that is the general opinion, sir," replied Mr. Benson mildly, "but still I have always remarked that after a great hanging bout here, the gaol is fuller than ever at the next assizes; I can't but think seeing their friends, in such numbers, die a shameful death, hardens the people, instead of making them quieter, or more contented."

"Those are your thoughts, sir," replied the Major, placing his back to the fire with an air of great pomposity, "but not, I am happy to say, the opinion of the present government, or the magistracy of Tipperary; they are fools enough to think otherwise, and consider a little hanging and quartering the greatest boon they could bestow on our county."

"They are high opinions, sir," returned Mr. Benson good humouredly; "and of course know best; I am only an ignorant man and speak from my own experience."

"Every one in his vocation, sir," replied the Major, jocularly. "You know how to lock the villains up; and leave it to me," he added more pompously, "and to my brother magistrates, to assist the government in hanging them first, and gibbeting them afterwards, as so many scare crows, to frighten those, that are left alive, into proper submission."

Something between a groan and a shudder escaped from Biddy, who still stood, panic-struck at all she heard and saw, immediately within the door. It had the effect of at once putting a stop to the Major's diatribe, he abruptly remarked—

"That woman wishes to see her husband. She must be searched before she is admitted; the fellow's name is Sweeney, he broke out some time since, and you cannot be too cautious."

"I remember quite well," said Mr. Benson, glancing towards Biddy, "it was a turnkey who let him out; there was a long

investigation about it, and the man was dismissed; as a magistrate, of course, Major Power, you can order her admission, but I think I have your strict orders here." he added, turning over the leaves of a huge book that lay on the table, "for not allowing any person whatever to have communication with that prisoner, or a man of the name of Mac Carthy, taken up under the Insurrection Act."

"You are quite correct, sir," replied the Major, drily; eyeing Mr. Benson with no very pleasant look for this gratuitous piece of information, "but I have since changed my mind, and require her now to be searched in my presence, before she is admitted to her husband."

Mr. Benson approached the door with the intention of summoning a turnkey to perform this disagreeable office; but as he passed Biddy on his way, he too changed his mind, and resolved to undertake that task himself. There was something in her care-worn, dejected, but still beautiful face,

that deeply interested the heart of this kind man; midst the conflicting agony of that moment, a womanly shrinking from the rude ordeal imposed by the cautious magistrate, was perhaps, most apparent, succeeded by a look of unspeakable gratitude at Mr. Benson, when he mildly, and almost kindly asked her—

"To show anything concealed on her person that she was about to convey to her husband."

Had he even suspected her before, the disengenuous honesty of look and manner with which Biddy now produced a small bundle tied up in a silk handkerchief, and placed in her interrogator's hand, would have at once convinced him she was no deceiver.

"I had nothing else to bring him, sir," she said, in a low, sad voice, as he untied the corner of the handkerchief, "sorra more was left to us afther the throuble an' the sickness an' the sorrow come on us; the Lord above be praised, I never was timpted to part um, though the wan

an' the hardship wint through me and mine; but I bore it all, an' kept up a brave heart, thinkin' wan time or another I'd bring ye back in comfort Martin, *acushla machree*, ye'er weddin shute, an' the hankecher ye tied round my neck, goin' to the priest, fresh as the first day we wore um; but now sweet Mother ov Heaven, I saved um through poverty an' fire, to dhress my *Boohillnee* boy for his grave."

Mr. Benson unfolded the coat, a dark blue, glossy as on the owner's bridal morn, with its bright brass buttons; the vest of yellow cassimer, equally unworn, and without uttering a word, replaced them in the handkerchief, tied the corners, and returned them to Biddy. A tear had started to an eye accustomed to sorrow in all its various phases; but, ere it fell, Major Power's observation dried it at its source.

"A cock and a bull story Mr. Benson," he cried, without moving from his position t the fire. "Search the coat well, and the

lady herself, I'll answer for her, she hasn't come unprovided with a bottle of aqua-fortis or a handsaw, to try the strength of your bars."

"Major Power," returned the governor of the prison, "I am jailer here, and you know, every man to his vocation. If I make a blunder in mine I must abide the consequences This woman I will now, with your leave, admit to her husband: if she deceives me, it will be against my own conviction, for her face to me is sufficient security."

The Major muttered something about dogged obstinacy.

Biddy prayed aloud "for every blessing here and hereafter on him who shewed mercy an' considheration for a broken heart," while Mr. Benson led the way to Martin Sweeney's cell, first asking a turnkey outside to take charge of the office during his absence, and providing himself with a ponderous key to let Biddy in to visit her hus-

band. She followed his footsteps with a heart much relieved by his kindness, while a faint ray of hope shot across the gloomy future, as her mind dwelt upon the past with some degree of satisfaction, at reflecting that the object of her love and solicitude had been all this time under the care of so kind a person as him she now followed. Twice or thrice she essayed to speak, but the startling echoes of her own voice, as well as the fevered excitement of seeing her husband after so many hopeless attempts, checked her utterance, and it was only when Mr. Benson stopped at an iron-bound door, and applied the huge key in his hand to its lock, that anything like a connected sentence came—

"God is in Heaven, an' we're upon earth, sir," she said, in an earnest, yet mournful voice, "but he sees ye'er goodness this day to a sinful, desolate crathur that wouldn't desave you. An' night an' day may He pou'er a blessin' on you an' yours

sir, for not judging wrongfully the innocent."

The door was opened, the dusk of the cell prevented its wretched inmate from distinguishing the persons of his visitors; but one of their voices had reached his ear, and with a cry that appalled even the stout heart of Mr. Benson, was Biddy enfolded in her husband's arms."

"I shall send a light, and, remember, my good woman, you have but little more than an hour to stay," was the Governor's only remark, as he closed the door and turned the key on this faithful but very miserable couple, whose sorrows and affection he respected—A sentiment no way extended to their former landlord, who now made his appearance, and applied his ear to the key-hole; for what purpose Mr. Benson stopped not to enquire—he was a public officer, and Major Power was a magistrate of the county.

CHAPTER IX.

FATHER AND SON.

WHILE the master was engaged in these matters, his faithful Dan was far from being idle; immediately after entering the prison he was conducted to a remote cell at his own request, where a prisoner, who had arrived but two days before, was for the present located. It was a narrow, dark apartment, rendered gloomier by the approaching twilight; while from the position of a loop-hole sort of window, placed so high as to render the space below obscure, even in broad sunshine, the figure of its

solitary inmate was scarcely visible in the dusky shadow of a winter afternoon; he sat or rather lay huddled up on the scanty mattress of his iron bedstead, and neither moved nor spoke after the entrance of his visitor; so still and motionless was his whole appearance, that Sergeant Wetherell drew in his own breath, to ascertain whether that lifeless looking form retained his or not, and for one brief moment the horrid conviction shot across his mind that he had come too late, and was in the presence of the corpse of his only son; a slight rustle relieved him on that point, but a feeling of awe crept over his mind, hardened as it was, when the silence of the interview was uninterrupted by Barney, though from his breathing he could now accurately judge that he neither slept nor was insensible to his presence. The elder villain of the two mustered courage to speak first.

"I'm come to see you, Barney Maher," he said, in a voice meant to be kind, and

which the Irish idiomatic term *soothering* conveys a more distinct idea of, than any other with which we are acquainted, "an' small welkim I'm like to have for the trouble; but I promised ye'er poor ould mother not to lave town widout spakin' to you, so here I am whether you thank me or no."

"What thanks you desarve I'm likely to give ye," was Barney's response, in a voice bitterly caustic; raising himself up at the same time from his recumbent posture, and by the movement discovering that his hands were manacled. "What thanks do I owe you, sergeant *avourneen*, for bringin' me here?" he asked, in a voice of taunting mockery, "or for these keepsakes ye ordhered me?" he added, holding up his arms, and grating together the heavy irons that confined his wrists.

"It wasn't I, Barney *asthore*," returned the sergeant, in the same tone of voice with which he had at first addressed the prisoner, "I fought black against it, an' was

for letting you go at the first offer ; but the Major turned a deaf ear to all I could say in ye'er favour—we as good as fought on it—but what could I do ; he said he could never show his face again in the county if you escaped afther Sir Maurice's grandson seein' ye that night in the hands ov the Police, an' sure that was thrue for him, for he'd have made a holy shew ov him wid the Magistrates and Grand Jury, if you warn't forthcomin'; an' he night an' day, ever since, thryin' to find out Miss O'Brien, an' them that took her away."

"I'd have tould him that long ago," said Barney, "only you an' your employer had me locked up, for fear I would; but wait till he sees me in the dock, an' then the whole court 'ill hear it."

"Wisha, Barney, have sense," said the sergeant, with admirable composure of both voice and manner, considering that he already saw the mine about to explode that was to engulph himself, "what good on earth would tellin' that do ye? It couldn't

even save yourself; for ye wor found in the house long afther she left it; and ye'er ould mother now, beside, would swear that she never saw the men before, that took her out ov her cabin, but that they looked, for all the world, like mountaineers; who'd believe then, Barney, *aroon*, that it was I, or her own mother's uncle that stole her from Bothered Nell, to bring her back to the house that shelthered her since the Major was called its Masther."

"'Tis thruth for all that," cried Barney, "an' I don't believe you that Bothered Nell, as ye call her, would swear against my biddin?"

The sergeant was aware of that, as well as Barney, but it did not suit his present policy to admit it.

"Ye'll find yeerself mistaken whin it is too late," he persevered, "betther for ye, far, to jump at the offer I made you in the Bridewell of Ballyvoyle, to confess all on Corny Mac Carthy an' Sweeney, an' take the girl yourself off with a good penny ov

money, to help ye on ye'er way to America; think of yeer end, if ye take your own coorses. The Major will be blacker than ever against ye, if ye thry to say wan word in the Coort to injure him; an' remimber, my boy, he has a dead man's declaration to back him, whin he wishes to fasten the rope round ye'er neck; an' those ar'nt times to cross the like ov Major Power, whin the juries are book-sworn to hang every man brought before um, whether he's innocent or guilty."

"You needn't have come here to tell me that," returned Barney; "but if he could hang me a hundred times, an' gibbet me afther, I'll never save myself as an *informer*. Do yeer best, an 'ye cannot do more than thransport Mac Carthy, myself, an' Sweeney, undher the Insurrection Act; an' it's a bad counthry that aint betther nor this, anny way, but I'll have naithur hand act or part in gibbettin' them to plase such born divils as the Major an' yourself."

"Well, there's no sarvin you," returned the sergeant in a hopeless tone, "every man to his likin'. You'd chose the gallows sooner than the handsomest young lady in the whole counthry, with plinty ov money, for the throuble of spindin' it, an' a fair chance of being a jintleman, with an estate in the long run, for only tellin' what you know ov two men that were black sthrangers to you not more than three years ago."

"I'd do anything for money," returned Barney in a determined voice; "but *stag* aginst them, that thrusted me, I'd die first. If ye pay me, I'll shoot her dead or marry her, whichever you like; bud if ye made a king ov me, instead of an estated jintleman I wouldn't sell the *pass*, or disgrace *them that came afore me*."

The last sentence determined the sergeant on revealing what the desperate character of Barney had hitherto withheld him from—his near affinity to himself; its secresy now was not of so much consequence, as any pecuniary claims he might

heretofore have dreaded his urging on him, as his father, would now be obviated by his being sent out of the country at the expense of Major Power. And when Miss O'Brien became reconciled to be the wife of his hopeful son, which the sergeant, in the exuberance of his parental affection, or, more properly speaking, his ambitious views, was sanguine enough to hope, the heir of Sir Walter de Burgo would be placed in a position to bestow benefits, instead of looking to his worthy parent for assistance. All this had been previously gone over in the mind of the sagacious veteran, and now as his eye, accustomed to the dingy light of the cell, fell on the dogged, vengeful countenance of Barney, he half dreaded making the disclosure, and anticipated that his acknowledged child's first query would be respecting the fate of his murdered mother, who had lain for so many years in her untimely grave; but time pressed, and he had a twofold object in view that lay too near his heart to give it up for a vague

fear. To accomplish the execution of Mac Carthy and Sweeney, might be said to be almost his first wish ; the former had manfully withstood him through life ; and kept no terms with the *informer's son ;* and though he had injured both these men still his hatred to the latter was principally based on the inward conviction that he had done him all the evil in his power ; and by a strange perversion of the common dictates of humanity, longed earnestly for an opportunity of adding to the transgression ; whilst the former he regarded with a more deadly feeling of dislike, increased a thousand-fold by the schoolmaster, heretofore, escaping the gins and snares of legal trickery, with which his wily foe had, from time to time, beset his path; to accomplish then, the ruin of these men was even paramount to his cherished scheme of aggrandising his only son, and to attain both ends, after a long pause he again addressed that worthy,

"Murdher will at last out," he cried—the

first word in the sentence came involuntarily to his lip, for his thoughts had been running on Barney's mother—"an' nature will spake in a' body whither they wish it or no; Barney Maher look at me, would you be afther knowin' ye'er own father?"

Barney had started to his feet, and whether there was more truth and sincerity in the sergeant's voice than on ordinary occasions, we cannot say; but the flashing eye of his son told him that his secret was anticipated; with a voice half choked with rising scorn, he cried out—

"You, my father! tell me Franey, the robber, owned me, or the hangman that gets a guinea for every rope he ties round an honest man's neck; aye, or the *boccagh*, that axes charity from the beggars themselves, but don't daar to tell me, man alive, that I'm Dan Witherill, the *informer's* son."

And the hired assassin, dead as he was to every other better feeling, hung his head upon his breast, as he staggered

against the wall, and sobbed convulsively ; inwardly convinced he owed his birth to that source.

" For all that, 'tis too thrue to put in a ballad," said the sergeant, drily, no way pleased with the reception his affiliating announcement received.

" Well, thin," returned Barney, in a voice that betrayed how deeply he felt the degradation, " if that be the case, I don't care now what becomes ov me, I can't be worse. I'm the seed an' breed ov *informers ;* with an ould mother, I suppose, that was no way betther than she ought to be."

" Whativer you may say ov me or my faather," returned the sergeant, with an attempt at offended dignity, " don't take away my poor ould mother's charracther, for she bore a good wan in her day. Bothered Nell is only ye'er granny. I was lawfully married to ye'er own mother, Barney, and she's gone to glory—God rest her sowl—this manny a year."

"Betther an' betther," cried Barney, with the laugh of a mocking fiend. "You'll make somebody of me bine-by. Alley Cormick is me granny, that swore away more lives than ould Witherill, her husband, an' desaved me undher another name, since I can rimimber annything. It won't be for nothing she did it though; or that her gran'son found out his peddygree. Give me the book now," he shouted, madly, "an' I'll sware hardher than the best ov um. Bate um all at it, father, granfather, or lyin' Ally Cormick hersilf."

And hoarse with passion, this scion of the house of Wetherell flung himself, exhausted, on his miserable pallet; his insulted parent offered no consolation; but like a skilful physician beside a sick couch, narrowly watched the progress of the distemper, and patiently awaited a favorable crisis, to administer, with effect, the salutary cordial. The sobs became less and less, by degrees, and his grief began to find vent in sundry exclamations and im-

precations on the race from which he sprang.

"Who'd thrust me now?" he bitterly lamented, "sorra wan, no more than they would the ould *informer* himself, that swore black was white, to swing his comrades, an' at last, swore himself to Botany Bay; the ould villain, he carried the joke so far; an' here's agin him, or anny man," shouted out Barney, his wild passion again aroused, "that never stood on a table wid a book in his hand. It ain't for nothin' they'll call me the *informer's son.* I'll airn that name for myself before the commission is half over. What houlds me back from it now?" he fiercely shouted, "Nothin' Barney," he added, in a tone of bitter mockery. "Do what you will, you can't shame *them that come afore ye.*"

The paroxysm was over, and in the succeeding lull, his sapient parent hoped for a favourable hearing.

"Arrah, Barney, pluck up," cried the serjeant, "don't let it be said you wor

afeerd ov what they could say to you; much you need care wid plinty ov money at ye'er back; I'd shew them they couldn't throw, for nothin', the *informer* in my teeth."

"Who daar to do it?" cried Barney; "take these off me," and he held up his hand-cuffed hands, "thin show me the wan that daar call me be *that* name, an' I'll brain him on the spot."

"You wouldn't be idle thin," returned his father, "for it's the first name you'll hear from man, woman, an' child, wance ye'er out ov this jail; everybody knows, now, *thim that come afore you*, an' Mac Carthy More wid all his pride, is the first to pitch it in ye'er teeth, an' Sweeney's wife to call you by it already."

"I'll give um raison," cried Barney, as he again started up, and paced the narrow limits of his cell. "I'll airn the name anny how, an' am ready, this moment, to swear an information of what I now tell you, that the night I was taken at Drum-

gar, I went there in company wid Martin Sweeney, to shoot you, Dan Witherill; an' that the man that sint us in it, was no other than Mac Carthy More, of *Slieve na Rhiag.*"

"I suspected as much before," returned his amiable parent, overjoyed at having overcome Barney's scruples, by a slight sacrifice of what was perfectly valueless in his own eyes, an adherence to truth; an' now *avich,*" he added, "put the finishing stroke to a good work, an' come wid me out ov this dismal place, and shew um that you're not afeerd to spake up like a man."

"I'm naither afeer'd ov God, or angel, nor ov the devil himself," replied Barney, "an' only I have the misforthin ov having sich as you for a faather, I'd sooner jump into 'the flames ov hell than appear on the green table wid a book in me hand; but now I can't be worse; you *stagged*—your faather, before you, did the same, an' ye'er son must folla' in ye'er blasted

steps, for he's still the *informer's son*, though his own heart was as loyal as the priest upon the althar."

"Come along then," returned the sergeant, swallowing the personally offensive part of this speech as he best could; "you have the raal sperrit in ye anny way, no matther who's son they call ye; an' hould up ye'er head man until I rid you ov these incumbrances," he added, producing at the same time a key, and applying it to the lock of the handcuff, while he stole a look into Barney's face, to ascertain how far he could be trusted before these preventives of mischief should be removed. There was a dogged determination in his eye, and though the whole countenance of the man might be taken as a faithful likeness of a hardened villain, still no lurking deceit appeared to warrant dreading any danger by the removal of his fetters.

"Ye needn't be afe'erd ov me now," said Barney, interpreting the expression of his father's look. "Dogs don't bite dogs—

I won't fall out wid ye now, though it's an ould saying two ov a thrade never agree."

The sergeant made no remark, for he was too good a judge of his son's temperament to bandy words with him in his present mood, and so run the risk of defeating his own object; he silently, therefore, freed Barney's hands, and the next moment this amiable sire and most promising son, had left the cell.

They found Major Power in the governor's office, after witnessing, or we should rather say listening to a heart-rending interview between Sweeney and his miserable wife. It had the effect, however, of putting this very benevolent magistrate into an excellent humour, considerably increased when he learned that it was Barney's desire to tender an information against the two men of all others he most earnestly wished to have the supreme pleasure of consigning to an ignominious grave. From Martin's confession to Biddy, he could only learn that a murder had been intended the night he

was taken up at Drumgar ; but whether it was his own or his faithful Dan's, from the broken sentences of the wretched husband he could not ascertain. Remorse seemed to have seized his mind, while that of his faithful wife was filled with horror, at finding her beloved partner guilty of so enormous a crime, even in thought.

"Oh Martin *mavourneen*," she cried passionately, "what could have tempted ye to plan sich a morthial sin. Couldn't you have left him to the God above us to dale with him, an' not shut the gate ov Heaven in ye'er face, atween you an' our blessed childhre, that are Heaven's bright angels. Glory be to His Holy name, where there's naithur sorra' nor sin to molest um."

"Oh Biddy, my heart's jewel, I was mad," returned her penitent husband. "The disthress an' the cruelty they shewed you an' my poor helpless childhre dhruv me disthracted, I wasn't mysilf at all at all. Whin I got out ov the jail I was like a cracked body, an' thought if he wance was

put out ov the way there was no hindhrance then to our comin' togither again in pace an' quiet; but when I seen the darlin' misthress, that never as much as hurt a fly in her whole life, sitting up stiff an' dead in her own aisy chair, the scum dhropped like scales off me eyes; I seen the sin thin plain enough, an' wouldn't for the wide world that the blood ov the ould villain was on my sowl."

"But 'twasn't you that killed the poor, dear lady?" suggested his anxious wife, willing to speak consolation to her husband though her own heart was wrung with agony at the moment.

"No!" returned Martin, sorrowfully; "but I'm not clear ov it for all that, if I never went in it on my own bad errand, the Polis wouldn't be brought in id, nor fire as they did, an' Miss Agnes, *mavrone*, wouldn't be without a good kind mother this day."

"Well, Martin *acushla machree*, it can't be hilped now, an' it was the will ov God, praise be to His Holy name," cried Biddy,

as she folded her arms round her conscience-struck husband, "let us do the best we can now, an' in the name ov the blessid Virgin make a clane breast ov it, God's will be done then whativer it is."

"No, Biddy," returned her husband, sternly, "I was led asthray be my own bad passions, an' the divil tempted me; but I'll die like a Christian an' a man, an' never turn tail on anny man, signs on far less on Mac.Carthy More, that was first brought into throuble by thryin' to sarve me an' mine."

"Oh, Martin," returned Biddy, devoutly crossing herself, "I never dhraimed ov puttin' sich wickedness in ye'er head, I could lay down my own life to save yours, an' thank God for takin' me; but to see you stand up to sware away the life ov him that befriended us in our hardship an' sickness would kill me dead upon the spot."

"You won't see it, Biddy *arvon*," returned her husband, mournfully, "the

long dark nights I spent all alone in this cell showed me the differ between right an' wrong—every sin I ever committed was remimbered better than if I wor tellin' um to the priest for the last time; an' now let um pass what sintence they will on me, I desarved the worst; for I brought you, Biddy, an' my innocent child there to sorra' an' shame be listenin' to a bad advice."

The wretched wife wrung her hands, and sobbed convulsively while she attempted to reconcile her miserable husband to himself.

"It's no use, Biddy," he cried; "playdin' guilty wouldn't save myself, an' might injure others, I have no heart left aither to wish to live, except it was for ye'er own sake, my poor disthracted woman, an' small comfort I'd be to you; for I'm ashamed ov mysilf."

"Ah, Martin, my own, good, kind husband, that never as much as said an ill word to me the seven long years we wor mar-

ried," cried the faithful wife, laying her head dejectedly on his shoulder, " don't spake in that way to me, *alanna,* don't, or you'll break in two the heart within me," and tears of anguish fell in torrents down her wasted cheeks, as her fond husband gazed with a feeling of despair on that sorrow-marked face it was once his pride and pleasure to light up with smiles.

" Biddy, my sowl's darlin'," he whispered, as he pressed her to his heart, " you have the wan poor little child that is left, lyin' on the bed there to look afther, and may be," he added, in a voice that struggled to be cheerful, " that things won't turn out as bad as we expict; Mac.Carthy is thrue blue every inch ov him, an' Barney won't *stag* for his own sake, so that the worst that can happen afther all is to send me across the wather, an' who knows but that I've a wife that id folla' me every inch ov the way, if it wor twice as far."

Biddy looked up in her husband's face, and smiled as in former years, and that

silent pledge to abide by his fortunes, was bond sufficient for her faith to the devoted heart she now was strained to.

They then talked calmer about their future plans, and Biddy informed the prisoner that a sum of money had been raised in their neighhood to fee an attorney to defend him, Barney, and Mac Carthy. This public subscription was not a heavy one, for it was raised in halfpence and pence, from an indigent peasantry that had many similar claims to satisfy, but it was still sufficiently large to induce Mr. Harney to take up their case and Biddy had besieged his office ever since, to learn his hopes and fears respecting the issue of these trials. In the multitude of other cases, those she was interested for, might be overlooked, had she not so perseveringly reminded the attorney on the subject; but, like the importunate petitioner in Holy Writ, to escape her almost hourly solicitation, he had endeavoured to see the prisoners, and, by their own story, judge what hopes Biddy might en-

tertain of an acquittal; but admission was invariably denied at the prison to either of the men, according to the strict order of the Magistrate who committed them, and Mr. Harney was obliged to put up with the visits of Biddy, who divided her time pretty equally between his office, and the open space in front of the gaol; subsisting, with her child, on the scanty bit of bread, some generous friend from her own neighbourhood, supplied her with from day to day, who came to town better prepared to wait to see their respective friends, than the miserable objecct of their bounty, reduced nearly to despair. She had that morning again sought out Mr. Harney, and the bitter anguish she exhibited at receiving the usual answer, induced a gentleman present to enquire into her case, and without making any remark to her, he whispered the attorney.

"I never thought of that before," said Mr. Harney, aloud, "this is the last day for preparing a brief; sure enough, I can

insist on it as a matter of right. You may go away, my good woman," he added turning to Biddy, "and you may depend on it, I'll see your husband, but am too busy to tell you anything to-night; his trial is likely to come on tomorrow, and I'll tell you what I think of it in the court house."

A crowd of frieze-coated applicants jostled Biddy away from further speech with her law adviser, and to gain another audience, in that densely crowded office, was utterly hopeless.

This was the whole amount of service this baffled, but still fondly attached creature was able to accomplish in her husband's cause; yet, small as it was, it revived hopes in the breast of Martin, as he listened to her recital, increased when she recounted the kindness she had met with from Mr. Benson, and a feeling of calm gratitude stole over his mind as he poured out his thanks in simple yet powerful language to the God who gave him such a wife, to be a

blessing and comfort within the dreary walls of his prison.

This was too much for the kind hearted Major, not even his ardent wish to hear something more that might elucidate all that was mysterious to him in the conversation he had just overheard, could retain him any longer as a listener, when he found the society of a devoted wife brought comparative peace and consolation to the heart of the lonely prisoner, and though the time was not expired that the governor mentioned as a limit to Biddy's stay, yet a turnkey was promptly sent by the magistrate to expel her a few moments after that gentleman had retired from the door; he had heard sufficient he hoped to put him on a right scent to hunt down the quarry in view, and though his mind was pleasantly moved at the prospect, still he could not help reflecting that many difficulties lay in his way, unless Barney was prevailed on by his father to give evidence, and the Major had begun to despair of this, after

so many fruitless attempts to induce him to do so that had been tried in vain, before he was finally committed to the county gaol, where, by the Major's order, he had been kept in the strictest confinement, heavily ironed; this he hoped might have had the desired effect, and to ascertain how far his plan succeeded, was the object of his present visit to the prison, as well as to admit Biddy Sweeney to see her husband, fully expecting to meet her on his way, which exactly turned out, and thus prevent any suspicion of his design, in according to her what wore the appearance of a mere fortuitious act of kindness; his busy mind, never in repose, revolved in its own cunning depths, how best to turn to advantage the information he had gleaned at the key-hole, and would no doubt have struck upon some plan to secure his victims, had not the sergeant relieved him of the trouble by introducing Barney to his notice, as we before mentioned, which had at once the effect of snapping asunder the cobweb-

mesh of his unscrupulous mind, and saved unfortunate Biddy the additional misery of being incarcerated until she consented to criminate her husband or his friend, a step this upright magistrate had already fixed on, when his reveries were, for her, so opportunely interrupted. It was with much alacrity then that he seated himself at the table, and drew near him writing materials that lay scattered about.

"Shut the door, sergeant," he said, with an air of great satisfaction, "and don't let any person whatever come in until this business is disposed of."

"You may let the whole world hear what I'm goin' to say," said Barney, in a bold, surly tone. "Whin they know I have a rascally *informer* for a father, nothin, they can hear me say afther will ever bring a blush in my face."

The Major was about to comment in his usual caustic style on this outbreak, but the sergeant behind his son's back gave him a look that restrained him, and biting

his lip, handed Barney a small book, he drew from his pocket, with a pink tape tied on it, so as to represent a cross, fastened at its knot with a huge seal.

"You are to tell the truth and the whole truth," he said, rapidly addressing the witness. "so help your God—kiss the book." The ruffian lips of Barney desecrated the sacred volume by their contact and the magistrate proceeded, "you remember the 28th of last October."

"Right well," returned the witness.

"Tell me then what occurred on that night."

"I went to Dhrumgar in company wid Martin Sweeney, to shoot Dan Witherill," replied Barney, boldly, "an' twas he that promised payment to me for doin' the job."

"On your own father," said the Major facetiously.

"I didn't know thin I had the bad luck to have him for wan," replied Barney, bitterly. The Major hemmed and wrote

a few lines, then flung down the pen and again addressed the witness.

"You got into the house by the door left open by the party who forcibly took away Miss O'Brien that night."

"Yes!" said Barney, "but Martin or I had nothing to say to them, an' twas ye'er own daughter they intended to take instead ov the wan they did."

"Keep that part of your information to yourself," returned the magistrate, who now that he was free to marry again, would have had no objection, if the enterprise had succeeded that would have deprived him of his daughter.

"Well, what *am* I to tell you," cried Barney, in a voice that warned his interrogator to offer no interruption.

"Why," said the wily magistrate, pausing, "it would be best to confine yourself to what would criminate MacCarthy and Sweeney, nothing weakens evidence more than wandering from the point to circumstances that have nothing to do with the

case, and lawyers now-a-days are so well up to this, that they ask you a hundred questions that don't bear at all upon the matter, merely for the purpose of entrapping a witness, and in the long run breaking him down."

"I defy their best," replied Barney doggedly, to this illustration of legal finesse. "I'll tell what I like, an' keep what I like to mysilf. It isn't sich as them id foil Barney Maher."

"What an admirable witness he'll make, Dan," said the Major, with a look of genuine admiration, as he looked over at the sergeant.

"No betther," cried his delighted parent, with a chuckle of success.

"A splendid fellow," observed the magistrate, "able to put every wig at the bar in the wrong box, "tell what I like, and keep what I like to myself. Stick to that good fellow, and your fortune is made without much trouble."

And he bestowed on this *beau ideal* of a

witness, a glance, such as Napoleon might be supposed to favor an imperial guardsman with, after coming off victorious in some desperate *sortie.*

Barney was not insensible to praise; to excel had been the bane of his whole life; so near akin are our vices to the opposing virtues of our nature, when tainted at their source; the same yearning for distinction that made a painter of Raphael, a statesman of Pitt, and a commander-in-chief of Wellington, caused this hired assassin to aim at excellence, in a vocation revolting to humanity, that now, like Othello's, had an end; his heart might be as bold, his hand as cool as ever, but who would confide a matter of life and death to the *informer's son!* In his inmost core he now felt it, while the praise of Major Power ignited into flame the smouldered passion of his soul; another line was opened to him to play the master at; and he grappled at his part with an energy worthy of a higher order of art; rapidly he now detailed every circumstance

connected with the conspiracy to murder Sergeant Wetherell, and put the Major in possession of the principal facts of the case, with which our readers are already acquainted; the magistrate paused, and looked grave when he had finished.

"Enough, and more than enough here to hang Sweeney," he said, "but nothing to implicate Mac Carthy; his defence will be that he never commissioned Sweeney to employ you; and your evidence must be corroborated to a jury. Sweeney may get a witness to deny it all for him, though in his own case the fact of his being caught at night at Drumgar, will be sufficient with what you can tell to convict himself; and yet I am inclined to think after all that it was my own life ye sought to take as well as Serjeant Wetherell's that night; could that be proved it would alter the case very much, for a hanging jury could be found that would eat their boots, before they'd acquit fellows conspiring to murder, I may say one of themselves."

"Sure if you think it will answer betther," returned Barney, with a sneer, that made the magistrate's heart quake, "you can put in ye'er own name alongside ov Dan's; it's all wan to me how manny I swear we wor goin' to murdher; it'll all go in the long bill wan time or another."

"Oh! but I am convinced that they often wished to murder me," returned the Major, attempting to gloss over the perjury he had first suggested, "and the wish is father to the act, so that you may swear the bantling home to their door," he added, jocosely, "with a safe conscience, and Dan there musn't be offended that an active magistrate like his master put his nose out of joint, with a jury that wouldn't take the trouble of hanging a man for killing a whole dozen such as him."

The Sergeant grinned acquiescence, and an information was then drawn, such as would have its due effect on a hanging jury, read over carefully for the witness to remind him of what he had to prove, and deposited in

the breast-pocket of the Major's outside coat, he then wished Barney "Good bye," first consigning him to the care of a turnkey, who was ordered to lodge him comfortably for the night, and supply him also with a good supper; then buttoning up his coat carefully, told the witness "to take care of himself, that the trials would not come on the next day, so that he would have time to think over what he swore, while he," (the Major) "would have in the meantime more than an egg to roast, preparing the case to go before the Crown Solicitor." With an additional pomposity of air he then took his departure, followed closely by the Sergeant, who rather just then dreaded a *tete-à-tete* with his newly acknowledged son.

"So they found out the way to make you spake," was the turnkey's first address to Barney, "few of your sort Major Power wouldn't run round."

An oath of defiance, and a threat of vengeance, was the reply, and equally

characteristic was the magistrate's remark to his faithful Dan as they left the prison—

"I have them on the hip at last," he chuckled. "That son of yours is a *trump!* —What will Moore, and Barlow, and the rest of them, say to me now; they won't get up such another case during the whole commission? What a laugh I shall have at them, after boasting in the Club Room as they did to-day, that they'd swing more men than any other magistrate in the county—a few days will show them the difference, and then, I think, I am pretty sure of making my own terms with the Government."

END OF VOL. II.

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